

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE NIGERIAN SKILLED WORKERS' 'LIVED
EXPERIENCES' UNDER THE STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT MODEL**

By

Rasheed Babajide Ojikutu

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ABSTRACT

The nature of Human Resource Management in Nigeria has been studied previously, but knowledge is lacking on the lived experiences of Nigerian workers under the Strategic HRM (SHRM) model (Anakwe, 2002; Muogbo, 2013; Badejo, 2015). To address the gap in the knowledge, this study focuses on Nigerian workers' lived experiences under the SHRM model using a phenomenological paradigm.

The phenomenological paradigm informs about both the method design itself and a theoretical framework which states that humans know and perceive the world through their lived experiences. The research method design involved recruiting fifty-three skilled Nigerian bank workers using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling selection units were framed around the workers' lived experiences. The data was then gathered using mainly semi-structured telephone interviews. The interviews collected were recorded and transcribed for analysis and interpretation using Smith *et al*'s (2009) Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) framework.

In summary, the participants believed that the HRM and SHRM models in Nigerian banks had elements of both Western and indigenous practices which influenced their lived experiences and agency. Discussions with the participants raised key themes such as; the trans-vergence approach, work-life conflicts, gender issues, the incompatibility of some Western policies and the role of the agency of Nigerian workers in shaping their SHRM model. The participants argued that there are gaps between the SHRM rhetoric and reality, partly because the implementation of SHRM policies is the responsibility of managers who have deeply rooted socio-cultural beliefs. Furthermore, the participants suggested that their 'work-world' has been influenced by Western practices while their 'personal lifeworld' is influenced by enduring indigenous beliefs.

The implication for management is that this study advances our understanding of the nature of HRM, and the role that the agency of Nigerian workers has in shaping the SHRM model. Lastly, the research limitations have been discussed and suggestions offered with regard to future studies and the benefit from cross- industry and longitudinal studies.

KEY THEMES: Convergence, Divergence, Cross-vergence, Trans-vergence, SHRM, best-fit, best practice, HRM, Agency, Structure, Culture and Lived experiences.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the source of my inspiration, my Creator and Guardian, Allah (SWT) and to every woman and man too numerous to mention who assisted me in one way or the other during this research.

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DECLARATION STATEMENT

ACADEMIC REGISTRY



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School/PGI:	School of social Sciences		
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LIST OF GLOSSARY OF AFRICAN TERMS

Cowries – whitish/yellowish shell formerly used as money in parts of Africa

Fulani - a member of a nomadic tribe in northern Nigerian

Hausa - a member of a tribe in northern Nigeria

Ibo - a member of a tribe in south-eastern Nigeria

Igwe – is the title of traditional rulers in south-eastern Nigeria among the Ibo tribe.

Jalabiyah - long cloth worn by Muslim men

Oga - is a common local Nigerian term for a Manager.

Oriki – praise song common among members of the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria

Oyo Empire – was a former Yoruba empire in the 15th century

Songhai Empire- was a state that dominated the Western Sahel in the 15th and 16th century in Africa

Ubuntu - a Swahili concept of interconnectedness of humanity through compassion and togetherness

Wa kwetu – a Swahili expression which means ‘one of us’

Yoruba - a member of a tribe in south-western part of Nigeria

LIST OF GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

AIDS - Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

AU- African Union

BBWA - British Bank of West Africa

CBN – Central Bank of Nigeria

CIPD – Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

ERP –Economic Reform Programme

ERPG – Ethnocentric, Regiocentric, Polycentric Geocentric model

EU – European Union

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HPWS – High-Performance Work Systems

HR – Human Resource

HRM - Human Resource Management

IHRM – International Human Resource Management

ILO – International Labour Organisation

IT- Information Technology

IMF – International Monetary Fund

LD – Learning Disability

LTO – Long Term Orientation

PDI – Power Distance Index

RBV – Resource-Based View

SAP- Structural Adjustment Programme

SHRM – Strategic Human Resource Management

UAI – Uncertainty Avoidance Index

UK – United Kingdom

USA – United States of America

WTO – World Trade Organisation

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Focus of the Study

The impetus for this study and the choice of topic emerged from my experience of working as a manager in the banks in Nigeria in the late 1990's and early 2000's. During the 1990's and 2000's, Nigerian banks went through numerous restructuring schemes (e.g. banking licenses liberalisation policy, consolidation and breach of corporate governance practices) which affected the human resource management (HRM) model in Nigeria (Awolusi *et al.*, 2015; Abdulazeez *et al.*, 2016). Abdulazeez *et al.* (2016) posited that weak HRM practices in Nigerian banks have contributed to poor workers' experiences, inadequate corporate governance and eventually, systemic failures. In addition, the HRM and the strategic human resources Management (SHRM) models in Nigeria are under researched and therefore, more academic research is needed in this area (Fajana *et al.*, 2011; Owoyemi *et al.*, 2011; Awolusi *et al.*, 2015). Kamoche (2011) also argued that there is limited literature in the fields of management and organisation studies in Africa. Accordingly, this study seeks to advance our understanding of HRM and SHRM models in Nigeria by exploring the workers' perceptions of their workplace by way of lived experiences under the SHRM model in Nigerian banks. This study is imperative, as there is limited literature in the fields of management, organisation researches and HRM in Africa (Kamoche, 2011).

A further impetus to research in this area is driven by the argument that most studies in international human resource management (IHRM) mainstream journals have focused on the emerging economies in Asia, Eastern Europe and South America (Kamoche, 2011). It has been argued that limited research on the HRM model in Africa has been linked to the relatively poor state of the economy in African countries (Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Kamoche, 2011). Moreover, any of the existing studies (e.g. Anakwe, 2002; Badejo, 2015; Awolusi *et al.*, 2015; Abdulazeez *et al.*, 2016) on the HRM model in Africa have not had or given an adequate amount of focus on the Nigerian workers' experiences. Hence, gaps exist in our understanding of the nature of HRM in Nigeria from a worker's perspective. As a result, this research focuses on the Nigerian workers' experiences within both organisational and national contexts. By focussing on the Nigerian workers' experiences, this study will contribute to the debates on the existing IHRM frameworks and the HRM model in Nigeria in particular. The key debates on the IHRM and HRM

models in Africa are introduced in subsequent paragraphs below and in broader details in the later chapters.

1.2 Background to Debates on the Nature of HRM and SHRM in Africa

The aim of this section is to introduce the distinction between HRM and SHRM as viewed in this thesis, and to provide a background discussion on the key arguments on the nature of HRM and SHRM in Africa. According to Osibanjo *et al.* (2012:19) “*the concept of HRM underpins the human side of the management and enterprises and employees’ relations with their organizations and its purpose is to ensure that the workforce of companies are effectively and efficiently utilized in a way that the employer obtains the greatest possible benefits from their abilities and similarly, the employees obtain both material and psychological rewards from the services rendered*”. In other words, HRM entails the implementation of management principles for managing the abilities and attitudes of the employees within an organisation (Ayanda *et al.*, 2014). HRM can be differentiated from SHRM in that SHRM suggests a managerial approach that makes sure that any human resources are engaged in a manner conducive to the realisation of organisational goals and vision (Awolusi *et al.*, 2015). Furthermore, SHRM entails the alignment of the HRM framework with the strategic content of the organisation so that the former supports the accomplishment of the latter and, indeed, helps to define it (Ayanda *et al.*, 2014; Liu, 2016). Ojokuku and Akanbi (2015) also argued that HRM differs from SHRM in two ways in that, firstly, SHRM primarily focuses on organisational performance rather than individual employee performances alone. Secondly, SHRM puts emphasis on the role of the HRM systems as solutions to business problems rather than individual HRM practices in isolation (*ibid.*). Having introduced some key distinctions between the concepts of HRM and SHRM, the subsequent paragraphs will discuss the nature of HRM and SHRM in Africa.

With the world becoming an economic global village and with the free movement of capital across national borders, there has been an increase in business activities mostly from industrialised nations to emerging economies (Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). Consequently, there has been a renewed interest in the nature of HRM in Africa as it is seen as the last economic and industrial front line in the main academic journals (Kamoche, 2011). However, most emerging discussions on the nature of HRM in Africa in the wider academic literature have focussed mainly on the effectiveness of Western HRM concepts and the role of national culture in organisations in Africa (Okpara and

Wynn, 2008; Kamoche, 2011; Awolusi *et al.*, 2015; Abdulazeez *et al.*, 2016). Most of the debates on the HRM model in Africa has led to four schools of thought (Laurent, 1983; Anakwe, 2002; Gupta and Wang, 2004). First, the convergence school of thought proposed that African organisations should adopt the Western HRM model in order to improve their workers' productivity and organisational efficiency (Ralston, 2008). Second, the divergence school of thought argued that national culture(s) play an important role in shaping the HRM model of any organisation and hence, cannot be ignored (Anakwe, 2002; Gupta and Wang, 2004). Beyond the convergence and divergence schools of thought on the HRM model in Africa discussed so far, a third cross-vergence school posited that both arguments are equally valid. African HRM scholars (e.g. Anakwe, 2002; Kamoche, 2011) argued that in order to characterise and classify the nature of HRM in Africa, the debate will need to move past the role of Western practices and national cultures in framing a HRM model for Africa. Anakwe (2002) and Kamoche (2011) suggested a blend of African norms and Western values to shape the HRM model in Africa. The fourth and 'newer' trans-vergence school suggested that organisations do not necessarily fall into any of the three schools, as organisations proactively take advantage of globalisation by redefining and exporting their indigenous HRM practices (Gupta and Wang, 2004). The debates on the HRM model in Africa represent the key sources of the existing literature for this study, especially in understanding the perceptions of the Nigerian workers' organisational and societal experiences.

Anakwe (2002) argued that the HRM model in Africa has made a significant shift over time from a position of relative unimportance to one of strategic importance. The HRM function in organisations has been required to justify its contribution to the organisations' financial goals (Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Ojokuku and Akanbi, 2015; Liu, 2016). It has also been observed that in Nigeria, a gulf exists between the HRM model and organisational strategies (Inyang, 2008; Olufemi, 2009). Similar problems have been observed in Kenya (Nyambegera *et al.*, 2000) and in other sub-Saharan countries (Khan and Ackers, 2004). Thus, this study has engaged with an existing framework which links the HRM model to organisational strategies using the SHRM model. As a result, aligning organisational strategies to a HRM model and contextual factors implies two possible SHRM arguments (Ojokuku and Akanbi, 2015; Abdulazeez *et al.*, 2016). The best practice argument posited that the SHRM model in Africa is framed by Western values and that Western practices bring about organisational efficiencies (Delaney *et al.*, 1989;

Huselid and Becker, 2010; Verma, 2012; Hamid, 2013). Osterman (1994), Pfeffer (1994) and Verma (2012) argued that adopting a set of best practices will improve the SHRM model, along with organisational efficiencies and consequently, workers' productivities, agency and experiences. However, the best fit argument contended that the SHRM model is shaped by contextual factors and thus, aligning any organisational strategies to the HRM model with contextual factors will enable organisations to improve their performance through their workers' productivity (Eze, 2006; Ukpata and Olukotun, 2008; Emeti, 2012; Akpan and Akpaetor, 2013; Muogbo, 2013; Badejo, 2015; Abdulazeez *et al.*, 2016). To advance the current debates and to close the gap on our understanding of the nature of HRM in Africa, this study presents arguments to demonstrate how the four HRM debates in Africa are linked to organisational strategies. To achieve this, this research seeks to gather Nigerian workers' perceptions and experiences on how their workplace's HRM model is linked to organisational strategies within their national context.

The arguments on the nature of HRM and SHRM in Africa mentioned above have been documented in wider academic debates (e.g. Kamoche, 2011; Emeti, 2012; Akpan and Akpaetor, 2013; Muogbo, 2013; Badejo, 2015). However, the debates have received a common criticism in their failure to identify already existing people management processes in the various indigenous cultures in Africa (Abudu, 1986; Nzelibe, 1986; Khan and Ackers, 2004; Ayithey, 2010). Rather than assuming that the concept of HRM is new to Africa, researchers should focus on how indigenous structures and cultures can be used to improve African workers' productivity and workplace experiences (Nzelibe, 1986; Ayithey, 2010). Jackson (2002) also questioned the current approach to understanding the nature of HRM in Africa, criticising the current approach which assumed the need for African management practices to aspire to be like the Western HRM model. Due to these criticisms, this thesis engaged with a potential 'African HRM model' based on indigenous African concepts. Additionally, to address these criticisms and to close the gap on how the HRM model in Africa are studied and understood, this present research study has proposed a theoretical and methodological approach that will explore the Nigerian workers' workplace experiences. Consequently, through the theoretical and methodological approach, this study has contributed to the limited field of Nigerian workers' workplace experiences. The importance of introducing the adopted theoretical and philosophical frameworks was in order to set the scene for the research design and

research approach. The adopted theoretical and philosophical approach is informed by the observed gap in the current understanding of the nature of HRM in Nigeria from the perspective of the workers themselves. The theoretical and philosophical frameworks of the current study are presented in the next section.

1.3 The Theoretical and Philosophical Frameworks

The purpose of this section is to introduce the theoretical and philosophical frameworks which will be used in examining the perceptions of the Nigerian workers' workplace experiences under a SHRM framework and how these (i.e. workers' perceptions and the SHRM model) are in turn influenced by any immediate societal norms. According to Gibson and Hanes (2003), phenomenology as an interpretive research methodology has a direct use in HRM studies because it helps to explain the essence of the human experience. Gibson and Hanes (2003) argued that phenomenology as a research methodology focuses on the meanings of the human experience and thus, could be used to explore human experiences within the context of management. Finlay (2009) also posited that phenomenological research methods need to recognise both the phenomenon itself and the subjective interrelationship between the researcher and the researched. In the seminal work of Giorgi (1997), he argued that the use of phenomenology can make the qualitative analyses of phenomena rigorous and scientific. A number of empirical studies have used the phenomenological paradigm to explore people's lived experiences of a particular phenomenon (Rosetti and Henderson, 2013; Fendt *et al.*, 2014; Gill, 2014; Eskandari *et al.*, 2016). The term 'lived experience' is used to describe personal knowledge, experience or first-hand accounts of a phenomenon gained as a result of direct involvement in daily life undertakings (Husserl, 1997, Gill, 2014; Eskandari *et al.*, 2016). To illustrate, Rosetti and Henderson (2013) studied the lived experiences of individuals from their own frame of reference as adolescents with learning disabilities (LD). Using purposive sampling, Rosetti and Henderson (2013) selected four participants with lived experience of LD phenomenon. Interview data was gathered using open-ended questions guided by an interview protocol which addressed key areas such as; school experiences, identity, self-advocacy and peer support (*ibid.*). Rosetti and Henderson (2013) recorded all of the participants' interviews using a digital recorder and then transcribed. Rosetti and Henderson's (2013) interviews generated a total of 163 pages of transcripts, and the findings were analysed using Smith *et al.*'s (2009) Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) framework. IPA is used to understand and explain how participants make

sense of their lived experiences (Smith *et al.*, 2009). Rosetti and Henderson's (2013) research results were presented in line with traditional IPA standards as described by Smith *et al.* (2009). Analysis of the qualitative data revealed four superordinate themes, and each superordinate theme had a number of sub-themes (*ibid.*). In other extant literature, Eskandari *et al.* (2016) conducted a phenomenological study of seventeen fathers in Iran who had the lived experience of fathering for the first time using the purposive sampling strategy. The participants were selected based on inclusionary criteria; that is, men who have had the lived experience of being a father for the first time (*ibid.*). Thereafter, the findings were collected using semi-structured qualitative interviews and a demographic characteristic questionnaire (*ibid.*). All of the interviews were audio taped and transcribed (*ibid.*). The data gathered by Eskandari *et al.* (2016) was analysed using the IPA approach. The result of Eskandari *et al.*'s (2016) study revealed seventeen themes, four sub-ordinate themes and two super-ordinate themes based on the lived experience of men about their paternal role(s). Thus, Rosetti and Hendersons (2013) and Eskandari *et al.*'s (2016) studies are important because they provide a structure that will be used in this phenomenological research.

Furthermore, the theoretical framework acknowledges interactions across and amongst three dimensions; structure, culture and agency. Similar to previous cross-cultural studies by Tayeb (1988), the structure dimension recognises both national and organisational structures. In this study, the national structure engages with socio-political and regulatory institutions in this study. The organisational structures include; the organisations' policies and practices, and in particular, the HRM and SHRM models. The theoretical framework used in this study also includes the cultural dimension, which incorporates both organisational and national cultures which encompasses sub-cultures such as regions, tribes and clans. For the purpose of this study, the organisational culture encompasses general organisational operating environments which includes ethical and value systems and visions and symbols, while national cultures covers religion, societal norms, and family/tribal customs (Tayeb, 1988). Lastly, the above dimensions interrelate with agency. Agency in this study is defined as '*an individual's capacity to act or intervene in their world*' (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012:812). The agency dimension of the framework informs how the Nigerian workers 'make sense' of the organisational demands as well as the/any societal expectations. Important to this framework, will be how the Nigerian workers improvise when and where there are conflicts between their workplace and

contextual socio-cultural norms. The interactions amongst the three dimensions thereby dictate the theoretical philosophy.

It is imperative to match the research methodology with the theoretical frameworks adopted for this study. The philosophical stance that has been adopted is based on Husserl's (1997) phenomenological framework – originally published in 1970 – which has been discussed in more detail in Chapter Two. The phenomenological approach allows for descriptions of how individuals make sense of the world around them (Husserl, 1997; Bryman, 2012). Hence, the main purpose of the phenomenological framework in the context of this study will be to explore the viewpoints of the individuals experiencing certain phenomena in their everyday workplace and wider societal worlds. By exploring the 'inner' viewpoint of the individuals experiencing a phenomenon, one can gain an insight into what the experience is like (Husserl, 1997). As observed by Anakwe (2002) and Azolukwam and Perkins (2009), Nigerian workers are confronted by the organisational structures they work in and the traditional norm of the immediate society that they live in, hence a phenomenological approach can help gain an insight into the 'two worlds' of the workers. It is therefore important in this study to understand how the Nigerian workers use their agency to create or shape the contextual structures and cultures. Moreover, reflexivity is desirable to examine the researcher's role and to understand the researchers' biases in any social inquiry (Bryman, 2012).

Skilled Nigerian bank workers are the main participants in this current study. Skilled Nigerian workers in this study are workers with university-level qualifications and work experience. Thus, there is a need to discuss the workers' context in order to illustrate the types of structures and cultures that they confront daily. The contexts in this study include Nigerian society and the Nigerian banking industry.

1.4 The Study Area: The Nigerian Context

This contextual section presents in broader detail the historical and demographical make-up of the research study's social setting. Nigerian history will be discussed from the pre-colonial to post-colonial era in order to illustrate the sociocultural changes in the research context.

Prior to colonisation, the various tribes in Nigeria lived in different socio-political systems with diverse histories, cultures, norms and values and none referred to themselves as Nigerian (Eze, 2016). The largest tribes are the Fulani/Hausa (29%), Yoruba (21%), Ibo

(18%); and the Edo, Ijaw, Kanuri, Ibibio, Ebira, Nupe and Tiv account for 27% with the other minority tribes making up the remaining 7% of present day Nigeria (Okpara and Kabongo, 2011). Between 1100–1400CE, Islam was introduced to the Hausa/Fulani tribe in the northern states through the trans-Saharan trade, while the Yorubas and Ibos worshipped many deities (*ibid.*). In the pre-colonial era societies, all of the tribes had certain common features such as the extended family system and the use of relevant socio-cultural norms attuned to the demands of a self-centred economy (Eze, 2016). By 1450–1850, the coastal Yoruba and Ibo tribes had made contact with Europeans resulting in changes to the economic and socio-political institutions of these tribes (*ibid.*). In 1841, the British Niger Expedition started making attempts to spread Christianity and European socio-cultural norms in the southern tribes (Falola and Heaton, 2008). By 1861, Lagos was annexed as a British Crown Colony and, in 1886, the Royal Niger Company was formed by charter to manage trade in the Niger basin (Eze, 2016). In 1893, a British protectorate was imposed on the Yoruba and Ibo territories thus beginning colonisation (Adeleye, 2011). Thereafter, in 1903, the Hausa/Fulani came under the British protectorate. The British colonial government amalgamated the northern and southern protectorates in 1914, forming the country ‘Nigeria’ (Falola and Heaton, 2008).

Nigeria gained independence in 1960 from British rule. Post-colonial era, English became the official language in all Nigerian government institutions, organisations and schools (Adeleye, 2011). In post-colonial Nigeria, Islam, Christianity and indigenous African beliefs became the major religions (Uzoma, 2004). In northern Nigeria, socio-cultural, political and indeed, all facets of life are governed by Islam (*ibid.*). Hence, Islam is a complete way of life in the majority of the northern societies in Nigeria (*ibid.*). In the southern states, indigenous beliefs and deity (a god or goddess in African belief) custodians still prevail (Uzoma, 2004; Opara, 2011). However, the roles of the deity custodians have changed from guardians of the people and traditional culture, to mainly performing rituals and black magic (Uzoma, 2004). In recent times in the southern states, Christianity has become more assimilated into the local cultures (*ibid.*). Eze (2016) argued further that many Nigerians who practice Christianity also resort to some traditional means of worship.

At the time of their independence, Nigeria had insufficient human capital and poor infrastructure to develop its economy (Adeleye, 2011). Post-independence, agriculture was the backbone of the Nigerian economy, with over 70% of the population employed in

the sector (*ibid.*). Post-colonial rule, the industrial sectors of the Nigerian economy were still largely dominated by British colonial organisations (Eze, 2016). As a result, the Nigerian government enacted two indigenisation decrees in the 1970's which ensured that the government took up to 60% of the ownership in most colonial organisations (*ibid.*). To actualise the indigenisation policies, Nigerian managers, many of whom lacked the relevant skills and experience, were appointed to manage these nationalised organisations (Adeleye, 2011).

Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa and the eighth most populous country in the world, thus highlighting the negligence of the HRM academics (Okpara and Wynn, 2008). Nigeria's population is estimated to reach 356 million by 2050, making it the world's fourth most populous country behind India, China and the United States (Oshikoya, 2008). Therefore, Nigeria has a big potential workforce, however, the country is troubled by scarce talent hence selecting, recruiting, developing, and retaining top talents is a challenge (Fajana *et al.*, 2011). According to Owoyemi *et al.* (2011), the educational institutions in Nigeria determine the availability of a talented workforce. Due to a shortage of higher educational institutions in Nigeria, especially in the 1980's, most secondary school-leavers wait a minimum of four to eight years before entering university. By this route, they join the workforce typically aged between 25-28 years (*ibid.*). However, following the convocation of democracy in 1999, there has been a surge in the number of public and private higher educational institutions bringing down the average university leaving age to twenty years (*ibid.*).

In addition, Nigeria has 250 tribes and more than 500 spoken dialects, thus the complex tribal make up of Nigeria suggests major issues for HRM in both domestic and international organisations (Okpara and Wynn, 2008; Okpara and Kabongo, 2011). Owoyemi *et al.* (2011) observed that the tribal and cultural diversity of Nigeria has shaped the HRM model in the country, and that any workplace overview in the different geographical locations must be treated with some caution. According to Ituma *et al.* (2011), some institutional factors which affects the HRM model in Nigeria includes traditionally structured gender-based arrangements in which men are socialised to become the main income earners and women are encouraged to take care of the children and their homes. Another factor is the respect for and acceptance of hierarchy and status differentials such as family name, chieftaincy titles, academic qualifications, social status, wealth and age (Ituma *et al.*, 2011). Other factors include a strong extended family system

which provides a form of ‘social insurance’, which takes precedence over personal aspirations (*ibid.*).

With over 200 international companies located in Nigeria, the economic forecasts and their relative international position will be contingent on participating more in increasingly global HRM best practices (Oshikoya, 2008). The global knowledge economy is transforming the demands on the workforce and it is hereby placing extra demands on workers for new skills and knowledge in order to be more productive (*ibid.*). Hence, preparing skilled Nigerian workers to deal with these demands requires a new model of HRM (Peng, 2009). To be successful, the Nigerian government should concentrate its efforts on the growth of its workforce (Oshikoya, 2008). The challenge of building human resources is difficult because Nigeria has the third largest population of people living in poverty in the world after China and India (*ibid.*). As a result, Azolukwam and Perkins (2009) contended that the trend among foreign and local employers in Nigeria is to promote how HRM can enhance organisational goals, hence the spread of best practice thinking which has been facilitated by consulting firms and business schools.

1.4.1 The Nigerian Banking Sector – History, Evolution and Context

The aim of this section is to discuss the rationale for choosing the Nigerian banking industry and thereafter to engage with its history and contextual issues. Several studies (i.e. Gunu, 2009; Emeti, 2012; Awolusi *et al.*, 2015; Badejo, 2015; Abdulazeez *et al.*, 2016) have been conducted on the banking industry, but there is still a gap in our understanding of the workers’ lived experience under the SHRM model. More so, the Nigerian banking section has been chosen because of its strategic position in the nation’s economy. The banking sector is also a major employer of labour in Nigeria (Adeleye, 2011). According to Adeleye (2011), the banking sector is of importance to the Nigerian economy as it accounts for 64% of the country’s national stock exchange market capitalisation, hence, the focus of this current study. Furthermore, Awolusi *et al.* (2015) affirmed that twenty-two of the Nigerian banks have implemented the SHRM model since the consolidation exercise of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Awolusi *et al.*’s (2015) findings concluded that SHRM has positively affected the organisational climate in the Nigerian banking industry. Other extant studies (such as Adegroye and Oladejo, 2012; Emeti, 2012; Badejo, 2015) have established that Nigerian banks have implemented the SHRM model. However, there are still gaps in the literature that need to be closed with

regard to the lived experiences of the Nigerian workers under the SHRM model. The next paragraph will engage with the history and context of the Nigerian banking sector.

Nigerian banks are mainly privately owned by individuals and local organisations, hence providing an oasis of opportunities to study both indigenous and Western HRM practices (Adegoroye and Oladejo, 2012). During the colonial era, Nigeria had an indigenous banking system alongside the British colonial banking system (Oluduro, 2015). Thus, Nigeria had dual banking systems i.e. indigenous and foreign/colonial banks. Most of the indigenous banks failed due to poor funding, the exposure of high loans and poor worker management (*ibid.*). Banking started in 1892 in Lagos with the advent of the African Banking Corporation (Oluduro, 2015). Thereafter, in 1894, the British Bank of West Africa (BBWA) started banking in Lagos while under the British colonial government which later transitioned to the First Bank of Nigeria in 1979 (*ibid.*). In 1917, the Colonial Bank was established, but later became the Barclays Bank in 1925 (Oluduro, 2015). The first banking legislation in Nigeria – the banking ordinance of 1952 - was established to manage growth and to prevent failures in the banking industry under the British colonial government (Adeleye, 2011). On July 1st, 1959, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) was created and started operations as a banking regulatory body in Nigeria (Adeleye, 2011).

Post-independence, there was a period of consolidated growth in the banking sector in Nigeria (Adegoroye and Oladejo, 2012; Oluduro, 2015). However, in 2004, the CBN issued a directive to banks to increase their capital base to ₦25 Billion (\$200M), resulting in the consolidation of banks from 83 to 25 (Ituma, *et al.*, 2011). Again, in 2009, the CBN removed the Managing Directors of five banks due to a violation of the Nigerian corporate governance code. In both 2004 and 2009 as well as in the colonial era, poor workers' skills and inadequate human resource management was always cited by the CBN as one of the reasons for banking failures or CBN's intervention (Ituma, *et al.*, 2011; Nwagbara, 2012; Oluduro, 2015). The 2004 and 2009 events have been reported to have influenced the HRM model in banks as most banks moved away from permanent employment to the use of contract staff through outsourcing recruitment agencies (Fajana *et al.*, 2011; Adegoroye and Oladejo, 2012). Adeleye (2011) posited that globalisation has shaped the Nigerian banking industry's HRM model and the workers' workplace experience. As a result, the IHRM model in terms of employment flexibility has shaped the way that the Nigerian banking industry contracts employment (*ibid.*). The banking sector in Nigeria is considered to have the most matured HRM model alongside the

telecommunication and the oil and gas sectors in the country's industrial sector (Anakwe, 2002; Ovadje, 2010; Fajana *et al.*, 2011).

Drawing from the discussions above, a research aim has been identified for this study. In order to achieve the research aim and objectives, three research questions have been identified. The aim, objectives and the research questions will be discussed in the next section.

1.5 Aim and Objectives

The current research seeks to contribute to the theories related to Nigerian workers' workplace experiences and the HRM and SHRM models used in Nigeria. The overall aim of this research is to explore the workers' lived experience under both the HRM and the SHRM model in Nigeria. The justification for this aim stems from observations by some African HRM scholars (e.g. Adigun, 1995; Anakwe, 2002; Okpara and Wynn, 2008; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Kamoche, 2011; Emeti, 2012; Muogbo, 2013) that Africa remains relatively under-researched in the field of people management. Some HRM writers (e.g. Jackson, 2002; Jackson *et al.*, 2008; Ayithey, 2010) also critiqued the current approach of understanding how African workers are managed, suggesting that they are often discussed within a pejorative 'developing/developed' pattern which does not take into account the unique cultural proclivity of Africans. Inyang (2008) argued that there is a gap between the HRM model and the central decision-making processes in many organisations in Nigeria. Thus, this study will seek to illustrate how the lived experiences of Nigerian workers are affected by both organisational strategies and socio-cultural norms. In this study, the Nigerian workers will not be viewed in terms of their behavioural responses to external directives or as passively complying with societal expectations, but as actors with intentionally expressed needs, values and expectations. The key assumption here is that the patterns of perceptions and behaviours of workers are based on their value systems, which in itself is culture-bound (Anakwe, 2002). This study hereby acknowledges the roles of structure and cultural dimensions as constraints or enablers in relation to the agency of Nigerian workers. In summary, the main and overarching aim of the current research is:

- To explore the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences under the HRM and SHRM model.

1.5.1 Research Objectives

The following objectives have been identified that will help to achieve the overarching aim of this current research:

1. To evaluate how a phenomenological framework can be used to understand the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experience under the HRM and SHRM models.
2. To understand how the theoretical dimensions of structure, culture and agency affect Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences.

1.5.2 Research Questions

From the research aim and objectives, this study will seek to address the following three questions:

1. To what extent does the HRM model in Nigerian banks affect the skilled workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experiences?
2. To what extent does the SHRM model in Nigerian banks affect the skilled workers' perceptions of their work-life lived experiences?
3. To what extent are the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences affected by organisational strategies under the SHRM model?

Following the introductory sections 1.1 to 1.5, the next section 1.6 brings Chapter One to a close. Section 1.6 presents an overview of the main discussions in the subsequent linked chapters of this thesis. The purpose of the next section is to provide a synopsis and structure for the thesis, and to make it easy for the reader to follow.

1.6 Structure of This Thesis

This section will provide an outline for this thesis. This thesis is organised and structured into linked chapters as follows.

Chapter Two - Phenomenological Frameworks and Theoretical Dimensions: In order to answer the three research questions identified in Chapter One, the phenomenological and theoretical chapter considers an appropriate philosophical framework in order to evaluate the findings critically within an existing knowledge reference. Thus, in order to

achieve the research aim, the phenomenology as well as the three theoretical dimensions of structure, culture and agency will be considered. The theoretical paradigm helps to theorise the Nigerian workers' contextual lifeworld and lived experiences. In order to understand the makeup of the contextual structures and socio-cultural factors shaping the agency of Nigerian workers, a further existing literature chapter follows Chapter Two.

Chapter Three – HRM Model in Africa: Workers' Agency and Lifeworld

Experiences: Chapter Three engages with the extant literature (i.e. HRM, IHRM and cross-cultural management) in order to explore how the workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experiences influences their agency within a contextual structural and cultural norm. The key debates here are the convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence arguments within the IHRM model. The focus of the debates is on how social structures, cultural factors and Western practices frame a given HRM model and consequently, the workers' workplace lived experience. However, these HRM debates do not account for all of the socio-cultural factors that shape the workers' workplace lived experience. Hence, a further chapter is required to discuss how organisational strategies linked to a HRM model influences the workers' agency and their perceptions of their workplace lived experience.

Chapter Four – The SHRM Model in African Context: Workers' Agency and

Workplace Lived Experiences: The aim of Chapter Four is to engage with how the workers' agency and workplace lived experiences are shaped by organisational strategies using a SHRM model in Africa. Linking the HRM model to organisational strategies infers strategic choices. The two key strategic choices are the best practice/best fit SHRM approaches. The discussions in Chapter Four ensure that all of the organisational and contextual structures and cultures that shape the agency of workers is duly debated using the existing literature. In order to conduct fieldwork to gather findings that will be used to answer the three research questions, the next chapter presents and discusses designing a methodological framework adopted for sampling design, interview processes, data collection and analyses.

Chapter Five - Methodology and Research Design: The purpose of Chapter Five is to discuss the research methodology and methods which are framed by the research questions, the phenomenological framework and the three theoretical dimensions of structure, culture and agency which guides how and the type of data that is to be

collected. Chapter Five considers the ontology, epistemology and methodological limitations in relation to the philosophical and theoretical paradigm, and the rationale for choosing IPA as a method. Purposive sampling and convenient selection approaches were used to select skilled Nigerian workers who have lived experiences of the banking industry and wider societal lifeworld. Specific research questions were developed and semi-structured interviews were adopted to gather the associated findings. Thereafter, Chapter Five discusses the qualitative method within the research design concept, research context, participants' profile, data collection, analyses and interpretation processes. There is also a detailed discussion of the research process which includes ethical considerations and the role of reflexivity, reliability and validity in qualitative IPA researches.

Chapter Six – Workers' Perceptions of the HRM Debates: Nigerian Workers' 'Lived Experiences': The aim of Chapter Six is to present the study's findings that addresses research question one. The key findings from the study are presented and discussed with regard to the participants' experiences under the HRM model and how the workers' lived experiences are viewed within the convergence, divergence, cross-vergence and trans-vergence debates.

Chapter Seven – The SHRM Model in Nigeria: Workers' Organisational and Lifeworld Experiences: The aim of Chapter Seven is to present and discuss the key findings on how the workers' agency, structures and cultural factors influences the SHRM best practice versus best-fit arguments required to answer research questions two and three. The aim of Chapter Seven is achieved by discussing the workers' perceptions on how the banks link their organisational strategies to the HRM model.

Discussion Chapter – Nigerian Workers' 'Lived Experiences' under the HRM Debates and the SHRM Models: Chapter Eight summarises the key findings under the study's key themes and addresses the study's three research questions. A further Chapter Nine is required to summarise the key contributions, future research and limitations of the thesis.

Concluding Chapter – Key Contributions, Areas of Further Research, Limitations and Conclusions: Finally, the concluding Chapter Nine presents the key contributions of the study and suggested areas for further research. The concluding chapter also assesses

the limitations of the research study. Thereafter, Chapter Nine presents the researchers' critical assessment and reflections upon completion of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO: PHENOMENOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS AND THEORETICAL DIMENSIONS

2.1 Introduction

During the discussions in Chapter One, gaps were identified in the extant literature on Nigerian workers' workplace lived experiences and as a result, three research questions were identified that need to be answered. These research questions need to be answered within an appropriate philosophical framework to evaluate the findings critically within an existing knowledge reference. The two objectives of the research is: to evaluate how a phenomenological framework can be used to understand Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experience under the HRM and SHRM models; and to understand how the theoretical dimensions of structure, culture and agency affect the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences. Hence, the broad aim of this chapter is to address the issue of designing an appropriate philosophical and theoretical framework for this study. Due to the qualitative nature of this thesis, and using social theory to help understand, assess and design ways to examine relationships within social context (Bryman, 2012), this chapter will guide the reader to how the thesis engages with the social world, and consequently, how the findings are explicated, interpreted and discussed in the later chapters. As a result, the adopted theoretical approach will inform of the choice of research methods (Bryman, 2012). This chapter will also set the tone for engaging with the wider literature which will be discussed in subsequent chapters. Therefore, this chapter seeks to place this thesis into the theoretical framework(s) that provide a richer insight into the current debates on the topic of this research.

To achieve the aim of this chapter, Section 2.2 presents the phenomenological framework. This section engages with the philosophical approach of this study which informs how the theoretical dimensions are presented in Section 2.3. Section 2.3 engages with the theoretical dimensions which allow for the phenomenological approach to be further developed along the dimensions of structure, culture and agency. It is divided into three sub-sections with each sub-section giving an overview of the structural, cultural and agency dimensions. By dividing Section 2.3 into three sub-sections, this provides a closer look at how the three dimensions are viewed in this study and how they interact with each other. Due to the non-Western context of this study, it is important to critically engage with both the structure and culture confronting Nigerian workers, and how they use their

agency to navigate these social constructs. Also, in order to examine and understand the types, meaning, essence, concerns and opportunities associated with a phenomenon that is experienced but often taken for granted in the social world, the view was taken to deconstruct the phenomenological framework into three dimensions which are agency, structure and culture (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Bryman, 2012). By doing this, the knowledge and understanding gained from reviewing the dimensions individually will inform of the appropriate choice of research methodology.

The chapter progresses to Section 2.4, which provides further justification for adopting a phenomenological approach, considering that there are other interpretative theories available. It is important to demonstrate a clear rationale and to ensure that there is a close alignment between the theoretical framework and the research questions. Section 2.5 presents the important phenomenological themes of lifeworld and lived experiences to illustrate the contextual challenges and opportunities that the workers live and work in. The lifeworld and lived experiences have been presented within the theoretical dimensions of structure, culture and agency. Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion and summary. Section 2.6 provides a summary of all key arguments that arose in the chapter.

Following the presentation of the chapter synopsis, this chapter will now progress to engaging with the phenomenological framework. Thereafter, the thesis will engage with the dimensions of structure, culture and agency, and the interactions between them. By demonstrating the interactions between the three identified dimensions, the thesis will illustrate the guiding theoretical framework for the discussions in the literature review chapter and more specifically, within the methodology chapter.

2.2 Phenomenology Framework

Choosing an appropriate social theory is an important step towards addressing research questions which involve the social world. Thus, this section involves presenting the guiding philosophy of the study. The aim of this section is to engage in broader detail with the extant literature on phenomenology and its theoretical dimensions. Foremost, it is important to state how phenomenology has been viewed in this thesis, as there are different definitions of phenomenology amongst social theorists (Layder, 1996; Husserl, 1997; Giorgi, 2008; Finlay, 2009; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Budd and Velasquez, 2014; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). Phenomenology is the study of how people actively produce

and sustain meaning (Giorgi, 2008; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). Phenomenology can also be viewed as how people perceive the social world or a phenomenon through their senses, and how these perceptions can in turn shape peoples' lived experiences (Layder, 1996; Berggren, 2014). Hence, it can be inferred that a 'phenomenon' can only be comprehended from experiencing an individual's viewpoint as it has been lived (Fendt *et al.*, 2014). A phenomenon is viewed as anything that manifests to individuals in their conscious experience, therefore a phenomenon can only happen if the individual experiencing it is present (Budd and Velasquez, 2014; Fendt *et al.*, 2014; Gill, 2014). The various definitions of phenomenology can be linked back to the initial studies of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Max Scheler (1874-1928), Jean-Paul Satre (1905-1980), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) and in particular, the contributions of Alfred Schutz (Layder, 1996; Creswell, 2007; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Bryman, 2012; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). Many social theorists have developed phenomenology further, and most arguments in phenomenology can be linked back to the work of Edmund Husserl or Martin Heidegger (Gill, 2014). Thus, many social theorists consider Edmund Husserl as the 'father' of phenomenology even though it was Alfred Schutz who first applied the philosophical idea to social sciences (Giorgi, 2008; Budd and Velasquez, 2014; Fendt *et al.*, 2014).

There are opposing views among phenomenologists as to how best to categorise phenomenological approaches (Fendt *et al.*, 2014). However, as stated above, most phenomenology studies and arguments have been broadly divided into two, that is, reflecting the two key contributions of Edmund Husserl or Martin Heidegger (Creswell, 2007; Gill, 2014). The key difference between the 'Husserlian' and the 'Heideggerian' approaches can be found in Husserl's descriptive method which suggests that a social researcher suspend his/her preconceived views in order to avoid influencing the process of finding empirical data (Fendt *et al.*, 2014). Husserl (1997) used the word 'epoch' to refer to bracketing or suspending biases concerning the social world in a process he referred to as 'phenomenological reduction'. In another sense, Giorgi (1997) referred to phenomenological reduction as the approach of taking the meaning of any lived experience precisely as it is presented in consciousness without providing any explanation or analysing them. Using Husserl's framework, Giorgi (1997) argued that phenomenology is a qualitative research methodology which provides social researchers with rich descriptions of a phenomenon as it is experientially lived. Giorgi (1997) also posited that

it is different from other qualitative methods in that it focuses on subjective data in four areas. Giorgi (1997) listed the four areas as that all phenomenological researches should be meticulously descriptive; use phenomenological reductions; explore the intentional relationship of agents with structure and culture; and reveal the fundamental nature or patterns of meaning embodied in the human experience. In contrast to Giorgi's (1997) frameworks, the interpretative phenomenological approach contended that the interpretation of a phenomenon is embedded in the world in the form of languages, social relations and is intrinsically linked to our understanding (Van Manen, 2007). Hence, interpretation constitutes a rudimentary structure of 'being-in-the-world', the implication of which bracketing is not possible (Finlay, 2009). In fact, interpretative phenomenology proposed that researchers can use different types of data including ones' own personal experience (*ibid.*). In summary, the main difference between the two approaches lies in whether the researcher can bracket his or her preposition of the social world (reduction) or not (Van Manen, 2007; Finlay, 2009). Some prominent differences between the descriptive and interpretative phenomenological approaches are summarised in the table (Table 2.1) below.

Husserlian phenomenological Approach	Heideggerian phenomenological Approach
Descriptive	Interpretive
Questions of what is known	Questions of what is experienced and understood
Mechanical view of person	Person is viewed as a self-interpreting being
Person lives in a world of objects	Person exists in and is part of the world
Analysis focuses on the meaning given to subject	Analysis is the relationship between the subject and the situation
What is shared is the essence of the conscious mind	What is shared is culture, history and language
Meaning is untouched by the interpreter's view of the world	Interpreter's worldview plays a role in interpreting data
Subject's meanings can be reconstituted by perceiving data to speak for itself	The interpretation of subjects' meanings can only highlight what is already understood
Strict procedures of interpretation guarantee validity	Development of individual criteria ensuring rapport

Table 2:1: A Comparison of Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology Approaches (Fendt et al., 2014: 402)

Although there are differences of opinion among phenomenologists as highlighted in Table 2.1, there seems to be an agreement among researchers that the phenomenological research method's central aim is to investigate personified lived experiential meanings (Van Manen, 2007; Giorgi, 2008; Finlay, 2009; Budd and Velasquez, 2014; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). Thus, the view taken in this thesis considers the descriptive and interpretative phenomenological positions as a continuum, in the sense that interpretation is inherently linked to the description of a phenomenon in the social world (Finlay, 2009). The purpose of adopting this phenomenological viewpoint is to address the criticism in Husserlian's bracketing of previous knowledge of worldview and to clearly define the role of bracketing in this study (*ibid.*). Van Manen (2007) suggested that it is impossible to completely bracket one's own pre-conceived notion of the social world. To address the gap, Finlay (2009) argued that phenomenological researchers could engage in a dialectic movement between suspending any prior knowledge and exploring it reflexively as a source of knowledge. Hence, reflexivity is necessary and it will ensure that a researcher identifies his or her role in the social investigation process (*ibid.*). Bracketing will ensure that the phenomenon or experience is reported as described by the research participants (Giorgi, 2008; Anosike *et al.*, 2012). This view is also shared by leading phenomenologists like Finlay (2009) and Van Manen (2007). Finlay (2009) contended that phenomenological research in practice should be responsive to the phenomenon being studied, as well as the subjective interrelationship between the researcher and the subject of research. Phenomenological research methods should therefore involve rich description of the 'lifeworld' or lived experiences (Layder, 1996; Husserl, 1997; Ehrich, 2005; Van Manen, 2007; Giorgi, 2008; Finlay, 2009; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Anosike *et al.*, 2012; Bryman, 2012; Englander, 2012).

In phenomenological terms, the lifeworld is the collective world of human activity which is often taken for granted in everyday life; it is the pre-reflexive ground for our being in the world and our everyday intentional activities from our perceptions, thoughts, imaginations and emotions to actions, and interactions (Smith, 2004; Budd and Velasquez, 2014; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). Central to the lifeworld concept is the view that individuals and the world are inextricably intertwined through lived experiences (Husserl, 1997; Giorgi, 1997; Sandberg and Dall'Alba, 2009; Budd and Velasquez, 2014). As such, the lifeworld is concurrently the social world and a collective of humans and structures (Sandberg and Dall'Alba, 2009). The structures of the lifeworld consist of the 'natural

attitude' of people, and the social and contextual nature of knowledge into which we are socialized and everyday routine actions (*ibid.*). Consequently, phenomenology seeks to situate all human endeavours within the lifeworld (Smith, 2004). The phenomenological approach in this thesis places emphasis on how the lifeworld is lived by individuals rather than extricating people from their lived experience and hence, it is adequate to strive for a rich description of a lived experience (Finlay, 2009; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). The implication of this phenomenological approach is that this study will draw its research methodology largely from an interpretative phenomenology position which posits that peoples' lived experiences and lifeworld are entwined, and cannot be separated (Van Manen, 2007). However, as stated before, this study will adopt bracketing to situate the researcher's role in social inquiry and not in the strict Husserlian reduction position that requires researchers to separate their previous knowledge from the research process (Husserl, 1997; Giorgi, 1997). Another implication that can be drawn from this approach suggests that there are interactions amongst the theoretical dimensions of social structure, contextual culture and the agency of individuals within the lifeworld (*ibid.*). It is imperative to engage with these dimensions in order to demonstrate how they are viewed in this study. The next section will provide further discussions on how the phenomenological paradigm is linked to the theoretical dimensions of structure, culture and agency.

2.3 Theoretical Dimensions

As discussed in the previous section, Husserlian phenomenologists argued that the lifeworld is central for all epistemological enquiries and that it is the world experienced and lived by humans (Husserl, 1997; Giorgi, 1997; Finlay, 2009). Husserl (1997) further argued that within the lifeworld, human beings consciously possess understanding of social structure, and thereby actively create societies and cultures based on their agency and through social interactions. Originally, Husserl (1997) suggested that all judgements of the real world should be suspended or bracketed in order to elucidate the role of consciousness and intentionality in understanding lived experiences and in constructing social reality. However, from the lifeworld perspective, Husserl (1997) surmised that consciousness is already engrained and functions in a subjective world of meanings and presuppositions that are socially, culturally, and historically structured. Thus, phenomenology became the study of an agent's consciousness and meaning within the social and cultural context in the lifeworld (Finlay, 2009; Sandberg and Dall'Alba, 2009).

As a methodology, phenomenology involves the detailed investigation of the participants' lived experiences within the structure and culture of the lifeworld (Smith, 2004; Ehrich, 2005; Van Manen, 2007; Giorgi, 2008; Finlay, 2009; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Anosike *et al.*, 2012; Bryman, 2012; Englander, 2012).

As stated in Chapter One, the theoretical approach adopted recognises interactions between three dimensions; structure, culture and agency. Also, this section engages with how these dimensions fit the focus of this research study. It is acknowledged in this thesis that there are various definitions of the dimensions (agency, structure and culture) within social theory frameworks and hence, will start with the definitions adopted for this study in particular. The first sub-section starts with the used definition of agency before proceeding to present the dimensions of structure and culture respectively.

2.3.1 Agency

Agency is viewed as the capacity of individuals to act or to intervene in their lifeworld (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). According to Ratner (2000: 413): “*Agency makes and remakes culture through creating personal meanings about the significance of things and through acts such as choosing particular kinds of friendship, jobs, or consumer products*”. Ratner’s (2000) definition implies that agency creates social reality through actions, perceptions, opinions and interactions. Thus, agency is not just about human choices, but encompasses all human endeavours (*ibid.*). It is essential to note that there are many definitions of agency; some theorists view agency as creative, contingent and as a result, it is considered to be a ‘un-structured’ integral part of lifeworld (Hays, 1994). From a phenomenological approach, human agency embodies consciousness, intentionality or purposefulness, judgement, voluntarism, reflexive, experiencing, goal-seeking and dynamic interplay with the lifeworld (Husserl, 1997; Giorgi, 1997; Smith, 2004; Van Manen, 2007; Finlay, 2009; Budd and Velasquez, 2014; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). The interplaying nature of agency can vary within different lifeworld contexts (Husserl, 1997; Giorgi, 1997). In addition to these characteristics of agency, phenomenologists argued that whilst human agency can modify and be modified by the lifeworld, human agency is seen as the ‘initiator’ of social action, and humans as the suppliers of ‘meanings’ to the lifeworld (Van Manen, 2007; Finlay, 2009; Budd and Velasquez, 2014). Basic phenomenology is that the lifeworld has no meaning apart from consciousness, and likewise, consciousness has no meaning apart from the lifeworld (Budd and Velasquez,

2014). This means that consciousness and lifeworld are interdependent within a phenomenological perspective (*ibid.*).

Emirbayer and Mische (1998) suggested that to fully understand the human agency concept, it must be viewed as a process of social engagement situated within the flow of time, informed by the past, present and future experiences. As social actors, humans use their agency to react to varying environments by continually restructuring their perception of the past in order to understand the causal conditioning of the emergent present, while using this understanding to manage their responses for the arising future (*ibid.*). As a result, social actors do not only recognize the resemblances between past and present types of experiences, and they also situate these typifications in relation to other people, contexts or actions within matrices made of socially familiar categories of identity and value (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). It can be argued that the typifications created by humans are mainly unreflective and taken for granted. Social actors must still put in effort in order to locate suitably where given experiences are acceptable and thus, keep social interactions working along established lines (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Berggren, 2014). Different determinative experiences, such as those influenced by gender, race, tradition, ethnicity, tribes, castes or social class background, profoundly shape the perceptions, thoughts and feelings through which social actors come to know how to act in particular social worlds (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). The implication for agency is that neither the lifeworld nor emotional traits alone define habits of action but rather, the actors develop a relatively steady pattern of interaction in active response to historical lived experiences (Fendt *et al.*, 2014).

As humans do not live their lives in individual autonomy, most of the outcomes they pursue are realisable only through interdependent efforts, shared beliefs and common intentions (Bandura, 2000). In other words, individuals have to work with other people to accomplish what they cannot achieve alone (Bandura, 2000). Thus, some phenomenologists expand the concept of human agency to include collective agency (Husserl, 1997; Bandura, 2000). Husserl (1997), in his early work on phenomenology, recognised the importance of collective agency through the concept of 'intersubjectivity'. From Husserl's (1997) phenomenological perspective, intersubjectivity is the experience of the world as presented not only to oneself, but also to others. From this perspective, intersubjectivity is seen as the shared meanings constructed by individuals in their social interactions and used as a daily resource to deduce the meaning of components of the

lifeworld (Giorgi, 1997; Husserl, 1997; Finlay, 2009). It can thus be inferred that consensus among humans is crucial in influencing our social relations and thoughts (Husserl, 1997; Bandura, 2000). Peoples' mutual beliefs in their joint power to produce anticipated outcomes and their collective inter-subjective lived experiences are a key ingredient of collective agency. In order for a group to accomplish its goal, it would need not only the shared knowledge and skills of its collective members, but also the mutual interaction and coordination of their transactions (Bandura, 2000). Therefore, collective agency is more than just the mere summation of all individuals' agency; it includes the inter-subjective lived experiences and social interactions of all of the members within the group or lifeworld (*ibid.*).

Furthermore, Hays (1994) posited that the choices that agents make are most often within the sphere of structurally available possibilities, and are thus patterned and logical. Agency in this sense is not about 'free will' or complete liberty; rather, it is the individual and collective interdependent action made achievable by a solid grounding in the constraining and facilitating characteristics of the lifeworld (Giddens, 1984). Therefore, from a phenomenological perspective, any choices are informed by social actors' lived experiences, and are also frequently collective by default (*ibid.*). Although individuals may not always be able to unambiguously explain the reasons for their actions, this does not mean that the individuals do not know why they did it (Giddens, 1984; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). The phenomenological viewpoint supports the argument that social action is conducted with the tacit knowledge of how and why humans do what they do (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). Tacit knowledge consists of a shared knowledge repository upon which individuals coordinate their actions with those of others (*ibid.*). The process of coordinating actions with others by adhering to the demands of the lifeworld invariably shapes social interactions and consequently, the individuals' lived experiences (Giddens, 1984). Within the context of this study, the agency's social relations in the society are formed mainly by implicit adherence to the social norms and general rules governing behaviours (Giddens, 1984). Agency capacity can also be explicit (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). The difference between implicit and explicit adherence can be modified through an ongoing socialisation either within organisations or in larger society (*ibid.*). Both tacit and explicit knowledge shapes all social phenomena that are characterised or constituted by human agency and interactions such as; the workplace, societies and families (Giddens, 1984; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). From a phenomenological viewpoint, tacit and

explicit knowledge are the properties of an individual's lived experiences within the structures of the lifeworld (Hays, 1994; Husserl, 1997; Appelrouth and Edles, 2011; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, Hays (1994) suggested that human agency and social structure have a concurrently opposing and reciprocally dependent relationship. Thus, it can be argued that on the one hand, human behaviour and action is a product of structural factors (Giddens, 1984). On the other hand, Giddens (1984) suggested that structural factors only exist due to human action. From a phenomenological viewpoint, individual choices and behaviour are not the result of 'free will', but a product of conscious and intentional human decisions modified by social structures (Giddens, 1984; Husserl, 1997; Giorgi, 1997). For example, an organisation's structure, such as what can come from HRM policies and practices, influences the workers' choices, actions and lived experiences (Anakwe, 2002; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). Thus, the next section will engage with the dimension of structure further in order to illustrate how structure influences agency and lived experiences.

2.3.2 Structure

The term 'structures' are viewed in this study as enduring patterned arrangements or durable institutional features such as rules and resources that social actors use within the context of a social action (Layder, 1996; Ransome, 2010). In the existing studies (e.g. Ahiauzu, 1984; Tayeb, 1988, Mintzberg *et al.*, 1998; Anakwe, 2002; Boxall and Purcell, 2011) structures include societal as well as organisational institutions. Societal institutions in this context include socio-economic, religious, political and legal frameworks in the lifeworld (Anakwe, 2002; Boxall and Purcell, 2011). For example, societal institutions include various political structures from pre-colonial to colonial era to military rules and more recently, democratic regimes which elicit different social actions from the social actors in different countries (Okpara, 2006; Okpara and Kabongo, 2011). Additional societal structures include legal and regulatory frameworks which shapes the industrial sectors in a country and consequently, the workers' lived experiences therein (Smith, 2004; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Kamoche, 2011). The industrial sector regulatory environment in turn influences organisational structures such as the HRM model, organisational strategies, and how this is linked to an organisation's objectives (Anakwe, 2002; Oshikoya, 2008).

Additionally, structures (as discussed above) are viewed in this thesis as being both enabling and constraining as to how people manage other people and their lifeworld, and

how they are managed within an organisational context (Ransome, 2010). In alignment with the philosophical viewpoint of this thesis, structure influences the workers' lived experiences, particularly, with regard to any political-sociocultural context (Iyang, 2008; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). For instance, a poor economic state can create a high unemployment situation in a country, thereby limiting workers' opportunities and choice of jobs (Oshikoya, 2008). As observed by Kamoche (2011), in some emerging economies, poor job opportunities coupled with extended family demands puts pressure on workers' wages. The extra demand on the workers' wages consequently affects their lived experiences (*ibid.*). Conversely, an economy in good order can lead to low unemployment, hence better job opportunities and thus, creating a relatively wealthy working class population (Khan and Ackers, 2004; Olufemi, 2009; Ituma *et al.*, 2011). Organisational factors and conditions also affects worker behaviours and in general, their lived experiences (Olufemi, 2009; Ituma *et al.*, 2011).

Furthermore, structure can be judged to be two-fold as illustrated by Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration which highlights the creation and reproduction of social systems through the interactions between structure and agency. One perspective provided by Giddens (1984) is that structure is so predominant that it creates or determines social actions, human choices and an individual's lived experiences. From this perspective, Giddens (1984) viewed social structures such as social and professional classes, peer groups, trade associations, castes, gender, religions or tribes as patterned arrangements which are so prevalent through time and space that individuals are compelled to live and operate within them. This perspective implies that social actions are products of constraining and facilitating structures within which individuals live (*ibid.*). Consequently, from a phenomenological viewpoint, a humans' lived experience is defined by their social activities and the lifeworld's socio-structural context in which this takes place (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Ratner, 2000). By the same token, human agency does not transcend normative social patterns, but rather, it is small variants of these patterns (Ratner, 2000).

The second perspective is that structure is created by social action (Giddens, 1984; Ransome, 2010). This argument has generated debate around how HRM models are shaped by societal norms and Western practices through human agency (Anakwe, 2002; Gupta and Wang, 2004; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Kamoche, 2011). From this viewpoint, it can be inferred that structures are a product of social action which elicits a

reaction from social actors. Therefore, social actors can be regarded as the suppliers of meaning to social structures (Alasuutari, 1995; Layder, 1996; Ransome, 2010). However, these ‘meanings’ are not necessarily freely selected by the social actors themselves, but rather, are produced and shaped by the culture of which that individual is a member (Giddens, 1984; Ransome, 2010). In this sense, culture is distinct from structure within the context of this study. Thus, further discussions are required on culture. The section below will engage with the dimension of culture to demonstrate how it is viewed within this thesis in relation to the phenomenological paradigm.

2.3.3 Culture

It is acknowledged in this study that culture has many definitions. For the purpose of this study, culture is defined as: “*the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group from another*” (Hofstede, 1980:21). Hofstede’s (1980) definition illustrates that culture shapes human agency and social structures. Moreover, from the phenomenological standpoint of this thesis, culture influences the collective agency of the social actors within and thus, the intersubjectivity between individuals (*ibid.*). As observed by Hofstede (1980), culture is not static and it is changing all of the time because each generation adds something of its own before passing it on to the next. It affects every human endeavour within a society because of their shared ideas; value system, attitudes, and expected behavioural patterns (*ibid.*). Culture can also be characterised by the codes and frames that people use to make and express their worldviews and approach to life (Bourdieu, 1984). At times, social actors ‘create’ codes, frames and meanings to exclude others and to increase the profundity of shared obligations to one another (Layder, 1996). Ratner (2000) argued that a person will have more knowledge of his cultural experience if an individual comprehends its social position than if an individual knows the personal characteristics and actions of the members. Furthermore, Ratner (2000: 419) contended that individuals need “*social relations to become real (realized) and objective (objectified)*” in their actions. However, Bryman (2012) presented an additional view that organisations and culture are social entities that are separate and external to the social actors with nearly tangible reality of their own. Hence, organisations and cultures have the characteristics of an object (*ibid.*). Proponents of this viewpoint suggested that organisations share similar characteristics of culture in that they symbolise a social order that puts pressure on individuals to comply with the rules of the organisation (*ibid.*). For example, organisations institute policies such

as SHRM to achieve organisational effectiveness through its workers' compliance (Olufemi, 2009). In the same manner, the importance of culture is emphasised in multi-tribal societies where culture influences work arrangements, organisational patterns, the workers' lived experiences and the work-world in general (Ahiauzu, 1986; Ankawe, 2002; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). Hence, cultures and sub-cultures are repositories of commonly shared values and customs into which people are socialised to function as good members (Ahiauzu, 1984; Bryman, 2012).

Drawing from the importance of culture in shaping human agency as discussed above, and due to the importance of national culture in organisations, many scholars have carried out extensive comparisons of the world's cultural dimension (Stonehouse *et al.*, 2004). Apart from Hofstede's (1980) five dimensions of national culture using data gathered from IBM, other notable seminal works on cultural typologies includes Schein's (2010) culture model; Adler and Gundersen's (2008) cultural synergy; Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's (1961) cultural value orientation; Hall's (1996) cultural identity and diaspora; and Tayeb's (1988) seven cultural characteristics. All the aforementioned culturalist studies have contributed to the understanding of national cultural attributes and cross-cultural studies, but they have also been criticised for failing to identify sub-cultures and the diverse nature of cultures within national boundaries (Peng, 2009). Mead (2005), for example, questioned if the cultural typologies suggested that national territories and cultural limits correspond. Hofstede (1980) and other cross-cultural writers have defended their typologies, arguing that national culture represents common cultural attributes found in all countries. Nonetheless, critics such as Mead (2005) maintained that there are some assumed elements of cultural homogeneity within the national groupings which is not necessarily valid in countries with distinct sub-cultural groups. Kelley *et al.* (2006) also criticised cultural typologies for being static, suggesting that this perspective does not take into consideration how culture can be influenced by environmental changes and other social realities.

Whilst Hofstede's definition of culture is used in this thesis, the study's phenomenological approach is incongruous with positivist and generalisation position of cultural typologies. This thesis' philosophical stance adopts a radically different reality paradigm seeking to explore peoples' experiences and perceptions of their lived experiences within certain social phenomena in their lifeworld. To a phenomenologist, all culture is relative to individuals and humans are a measure of their culture(s) (Girogi,

1997; Van Manen, 2007; Finlay, 2009). A phenomenological approach to culture thereby suggests that all cultures are processes and the creation of human endeavours and of the intentional consciousness of individuals in adjusting to essential situations in nature and lifeworld (Husserl, 1997; Giorgi, 1997). Husserl (1997) argued that the role of the intentional human consciousness and inventive actions is to interact with the social world to create a culture lifeworld relative to human necessities and ambitions. Further, Husserl's (1997) phenomenological approach suggested that all forms of human consciousness are constitutive of their cultural reality. From Husserl's (1997) arguments, one can infer the duality nature of culture, that is, on the one hand, culture is a social construct and an attribute of humans. On the other hand, culture shapes the intentional consciousness and social actions of humans within the lifeworld. To this effect, phenomenologists have argued that as is the case with social structures, humans use their choices and intentional consciousness to construct their 'cultural lifeworld' while remaining subject to the cultural determinism of their own 'cultural lifeworld' (Van Manen, 2007; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). By collecting the experiences, thoughts and perceptions of cultures that people have been exposed to, one can gain an in-depth understanding of the individuals' lived experiences (Finlay, 2009; Bryman, 2012). Since the lifeworld of each society is subjective, the cultural experiences of people within each society is relative, therefore, the cultural typologies discussed above are not suitable templates for understanding humans' lived experiences (Heidegger, 1962; Husserl, 1997; Finlay, 2009; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Anosike *et al.*, 2012).

It can be surmised thus, that individuals draw upon structure and culture to produce and reproduce social actions (Heidegger, 1962; Layder, 1996; Husserl, 1997; Giorgi, 1997; Smith, 2004; Finlay, 2009; Ransome, 2010; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). In other words, the meaning can be understood as individuals are constructed by the experience of their lifeworld, while at the same time, individuals are constructing the lifeworld from their personal background and lived experiences (Heidegger, 1962). Heidegger (1962) described the relationship between individuals and the lifeworld as inextricably cultural in social structures and in the historical context. These arguments are suggestive of a continuing interaction between humans and the lifeworld as they constitute and are constituted by each other (*ibid.*). As such, a key issue to be mindful of is that it is sometimes challenging to separate structure and culture from agency, as the three can be interconnected and sometimes difficult to separate (Giddens, 1984; Hays, 1994). For

example, Ratner (2000) differentiated agency from culture in that agency is regarded as the personal traits, attitudes and personal attributes of individuals that operate outside culture. However, Ratner (2000) suggested that agency depends on social interaction for its realisation. Ratner (2000) argued that agency forms personal identity through the process of encompassing personal experience within social actions. For this reason, human agency influences an individual's lived experience through structural and cultural interactions within the lifeworld (*ibid.*). Consequently, lived experience is defined by the social activities and the concepts in which it takes place (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Ratner, 2000).

Having discussed the phenomenological framework and the three theoretical dimensions (structure, culture and agency) above, the purpose of which was to present the philosophical and theoretical direction for this thesis, this chapter will now progress to discussing the adoption of a phenomenological perspective. Having a rationale for adopting a phenomenological approach is imperative, as there is the need to ensure consistency between the philosophical stance, the methodology adopted and the type of data to be gathered, all of which has been informed by the research questions to be answered. Therefore, the next section provides further insight as to why a phenomenological approach provides the best guiding philosophical paradigm in addressing the research questions, hereby closing the gap in our understanding of the workers' lived experiences.

2.4 Adopting a Phenomenological Approach

As stated earlier, the philosophical approach undertaken in this study has been steered by the research questions which seek to understand the workers' perceptions of their lived experience within a specific contextual lifeworld, that of the Nigerian banking workplace. From existing social theories, phenomenology offers a suitable philosophical approach to study an individual's lived experiences within any social context (Fendt *et al.*, 2014). In particular, phenomenological methods acknowledge that only individuals who have experienced a phenomenon are able to describe it as it is lived and thus, a phenomenon can only be known from the experiencing individual's perspective (Merleau-Ponty, 1945; Husserl, 1997; Mapp, 2008; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). The descriptive-interpretive phenomenological stance of this study allows for the flexible and dynamic individual perspectives of the participants to contribute towards more general themes (Finlay, 2009). However, the phenomenological philosophy has influenced a number of prominent

theories within other interpretative philosophies and organisational studies such as social constructionism, constructivism and interpretivism (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Meyer, 2008). Hence, the theoretical assumptions underpinning phenomenology are similar in a number of ways to the philosophy of other interpretative theories as mentioned above (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Bryman, 2012). It is therefore important to engage with the interpretivist, social constructionist and constructivist philosophies in order to demonstrate why the phenomenological approach was adopted instead of the other interpretative positions. By highlighting the areas of differences of each philosophy, this thesis will be able to demonstrate why phenomenology is a more germane philosophical and theoretical framework.

Interpretative positions are distinct when compared to a positivist approach because interpretivism, social constructionism, constructivism and phenomenology all aim to understand the way people make meanings (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Giddens, 1984; Husserl, 1997; Van Manen, 2007; Bryman, 2012). All interpretative philosophies discussed previously place their deliberations on humans as sources of social and cultural repositories, and the way that individuals relate with, interpret, act and influence culture and social phenomenon within their lifeworld (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). In addition, interpretative philosophies share the phenomenological view that humans possess an understanding of social structures, and actively create societies and cultures based on their agency and social interactions (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Gill, 2014). The interpretative philosophies similarly shares the tenets that meaning is created and negotiated by human actors, and the need to understand humans' lived experience within their social world (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Bryman, 2012). Hence, the interpretative philosophies suggest a different methodological approach from a positivist position, because the interpretative stance places the human interpretation and lived experience at the centre of its analysis (Finlay, 2009; Anosike *et al.*, 2012; Gill, 2014). Any of the interpretative philosophies (e.g. interpretivism, social constructionism, constructivism and phenomenology) would be a good choice to be adopted as a guiding philosophical and theoretical framework in this study. As a result, there is a need to discuss the interpretative philosophies further with the intention of understanding why a phenomenological paradigm was the preferred guiding philosophy in this study. The three interpretative philosophies will be discussed to illustrate why a phenomenological framework was adopted.

The first interpretative philosophy to be discussed is interpretivism. Interpretivism is used to group together diverse approaches that oppose the objectivist view that there is 'meaning' in the world independent of consciousness (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). The interpretivist position also holds that understanding reasons and social actions requires focusing on interpretation and the social context of human experiences (*ibid.*). Interpretivism differs from other interpretative philosophies in that it places emphasis upon the understanding of any cultural contexts that are involved (Bryman, 2012). The second interpretative philosophy, social constructionism, takes the viewpoint that an individual's perceptions of the world are influenced by the reality that society imposes on them through social interaction between people with mutual social and cultural lived experiences (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Bryman, 2012). Hence, a social constructionist inquiry is interested in discovering how individuals as well as groups construct their perceived realities (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Social construction theories are used to interpret the lifeworld and to enhance our understanding of how social actors on a collective and individual level produce and replicate social structures and culture (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Giddens, 1984; Gill, 2014). Social constructionism is distinctive from interpretivism and other variants of interpretative philosophies, in that its focus is on language and social interaction as the mediators of meaning in social inquiries (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). Social constructionism is also distinct in that concepts are socially constructed and reflected in our knowledge equating to something 'real' in the world (*ibid.*). The third interpretative philosophy is constructivism. Constructivism is the position that humans must construct their own individual knowledge rather than passively accepting it from other people (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). Constructivism emphasises the role that culture plays in shaping human knowledge (*ibid.*). Social constructionism shares the tenets of social constructivism, but places more focus on the role of language, not only in shaping the ways in which knowledge is constructed, but also in influencing localised forms of discursive lifeworld-making (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012).

The interpretative philosophies (e.g. interpretivism, social constructionism, constructivism and phenomenology) discussed share a similar paradigm with phenomenological philosophy in that meaning is culturally given (Giorgi, 1997; Van Manen, 2007; Finlay, 2009; Gill, 2014). However, rather than aiming to understand the interpretation, phenomenology aims to get beyond culture and language to understand phenomena as

they are directly experienced (Husserl, 1997, Giorgi, 1997; Berggren, 2014; Budd and Velasques, 2014). Moreover, phenomenologists reject the views of interpretivism, social constructionism, constructivism and other interpretative philosophies in that we cannot go outside structure and cultural consciousness in our lived experience of the lifeworld (Van Manen, 2007; Finlay, 2009; Bryman, 2012; Berggren, 2014). Phenomenology's primary aim is to understand phenomena as it appears to our conscious minds in our immediate experience (Heidegger, 1962; Husserl, 1997). Unlike other social theoretical approaches, advocates of phenomenology seek to question what we take for granted in order to construct new meanings and social reality within our lifeworld (Heidegger, 1962; Creswell, 2007; Sandberg and Dall'Alba, 2009; Budd, 2014; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). By what we take for granted, phenomenologists argue that everyday sensory-perceptual experience is basically intentional (Anosike *et al.*, 2012; Berggren, 2014; Budd and Velasques, 2014). The discussions so far have provided some essential areas where phenomenology differs from other interpretative theories and more importantly, how phenomenology became the guiding philosophy of this study within the plethora of social theories to choose from. In addition, the phenomenological approach is informed by the participants in this study who have lived experiences of specific phenomena being researched (Finlay, 2009; Anosike *et al.*, 2012; Bryman, 2012). The participants in this study are skilled workers with lived experiences of organisational and societal structures, and cultures.

The phenomenological framework is appropriate to study workers in organisations who are intersubjectively connected by being human agents with a consciousness and shared common aims and purposes (Budd and Velasquez, 2014). Budd and Velasques (2014) suggested that it is important to note that the connection should be concurrently incidental (in that all participants are workers in the organisation and share the same organisational goals and objectives) and self-selected (in that the workers elect to work for the organisation and consent to the *a priori* conditions of employment). Similarly, Anosike *et al.* (2012) argued that phenomenology can be used in the empirical investigation of management phenomena. Anosike *et al.* (2012) also posited that phenomenology is a scientific qualitative research which can be used to generate a deeper and richer understanding of management practices. Anosike *et al.* (2012) adopted Husserl-Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological reduction research approach. Earlier, Ehrich (2005) – one of Anosike's co-authors – and Shaw (2010) both argued for the use of a phenomenological framework to offer a fresh understanding in management studies and

in order to determine business goals. However, there are limited studies demonstrating the application of phenomenology in management research, but this is said to be changing (Finlay, 2009). Most extant studies on phenomenological studies have focused on specific phenomena in psychology and health care issues (Van Manen, 2007; Giorgi, 1997 & 2008; Finlay, 2009). Many phenomenologists and social theorists (e.g. Layder, 1994; Husserl, 1997; Van Manen, 2007; Giorgi, 2008; Finlay, 2009; Anosike *et al.*, 2012; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Englander, 2012; Fendt *et al.*, 2014) are of the view that a phenomenological study is 'phenomenological' when it entails both a rich description of the lifeworld and lived experience.

According to Gibson and Hanes (2003), phenomenology as an interpretative research methodology has a direct use in HRM studies because it helps to explain the essence of the human experience. Gibson and Hanes (2003) argued that the most common features in HRM literature have been theory building and foundational approaches that emphasise a positivist paradigm. Gibson and Hanes (2003) contended that phenomenology methodology can be used to gain an in-depth understanding of the nature and meaning of everyday experiences, or simply put, lived experience. Finlay (2009) also posited that there is a need for phenomenological research methods to entail both the phenomenon and the subjective interrelationship between the researcher and the subject of research. Giorgi (1997), for example, argued that the use of the phenomenological method can make the qualitative analyses of phenomena both rigorous and scientific. Both Giorgi (2008) and Finlay (2009) posited that the phenomenology method is intrinsically qualitative in nature and that a lived experience does not always mean an objective narration of events because objectivity frequently means trying to explicate an event or experience as distinct from its related surroundings.

Another reason to adopt a phenomenological approach relates to a lack of research of this type in academic journals, with most articles concerning HRM debates in Nigeria following a positivist paradigm (e.g. Ahiauzu, 1989; Adigun, 1995; Anakwe, 2002; Inyang, 2008; Azolukwan and Perkins, 2009; Olufemi, 2009; Babaita, 2010; Fajana *et al.*, 2011; Oladipo and Abdulkadir, 2011; Emeti, 2012; Akpan and Akpaetor, 2013; Muogbo, 2013). In addition, Adeleye (2011) and Ituma *et al.*'s (2011) studies focused on Nigerian management using an interpretative-constructivist-phenomenology approach without a direct focus on the HRM model. Kamoche (1997) argued that a positivist approach addresses, to some extent, the ontological issues in African management while the

epistemological issues remain largely unaddressed. Hence, this study seeks to address the ontological and epistemological issues in HRM studies in Africa using a phenomenological framework.

Nwagbara (2012) called for a post-modernist approach to deconstruct the one dimensional orientation of apprehending African management policies and practices. Nwagbara (2012) proposed an indigenous African management practice based on the concept of '*ubuntu*' (i.e. an African concept of interconnectedness of humanity through compassion and togetherness). Whilst this particular theoretical approach is contextually new, the Afrocentric concept of '*ubuntu*' in itself is not. The unified Afrocentric '*ubuntu*' approach raises a fundamental epistemological issue which is engrained in the fact that Africa is not socio-culturally and historically homogeneous (Kamoche, 2011). As observed by Ahiauzu (1984) and Adigun (1995), Nigeria is culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse. Hence, Azolukwam and Perkins (2009) proposed a sub-cultural approach by evolving a 'Nigerian HRM model'. One can argue that a sub-cultural approach in a country such as Nigeria, with over 250 distinct ethnic groupings, will be cumbersome (Okpara and Wynn, 2008; Okpara and Kabongo, 2011). A way around such challenges has been put forward by Anakwe (2002). Anakwe (2002) suggested that future studies on HRM debates in Nigeria should focus on examining the workers' perceptions of their lived experiences under the HRM model and their categorisation of the practices as either foreign, indigenous or hybrid. Such a suggestion is congruent with the phenomenological framework of this study.

The next section will place discussions on phenomenology into a contextual perspective by theorising the lifeworld, and the perceptions of the participants' lived experiences. The two key concepts of 'lifeworld' and 'lived experience' are central to how phenomenology as a framework will be used in this study. More so, both lifeworld and lived experiences are considered in this thesis to be intrinsically linked as it is only possible for people to live in the lifeworld, hence they are presented in an interwoven pattern as seen below.

2.5 Theorising the Nigerian Workers' Lifeworld and Lived Experience

With skilled Nigerian bank workers being the key informants in the study, this section will now present the Nigerian workers' contextual lifeworld and perceptions of their lived experiences therein. Whilst phenomenologists (e.g. Van Manen, 2007; Giorgi, 2008; Finlay, 2009; Anosike *et al.*, 2012) agreed that phenomenology-based research involves

the lifeworld or lived experiences, there is less agreement on what the focus of such research should be. Therefore, both lifeworld and lived experiences concepts will be presented in tandem to illustrate their mutual dependence. This study will explore the lifeworld of Nigerian workers, which consists of the essential features of structures and cultures within the country (Anakwe, 2002). Based upon the theoretical framework of this study, the lifeworld consists of all of the Nigerian institutions influencing the HRM model (e.g. socio-economic, religious, traditional, customary, cultural, political and regulatory frameworks) within the society and the HRM policies and practices before they are conceptualised or reflected upon by the agents (Nigerian workers) (Husserl, 1997; Anakwe, 2002; Van Manen, 2007). In addition, the focus of a phenomenological research is on the agents' perceptions of their day-to-day lived experiences of said aforementioned structure and culture, and the interactions of the three dimensions (Husserl, 1964; Finlay, 2009; Anosike *et al.*, 2012). Based upon the need to address the research questions (see Chapter One), this study will focus more on the Nigerian workers' perceptions of their lived experiences of the lifeworld, although it is imperative to reiterate that all lived experiences take place within lifeworld and likewise lifeworld is the collective human activity which informs peoples' lived experiences (Husserl, 1997; Van Manen, 2007). Hence, both lifeworld and lived experiences are entwined, yet distinct (Husserl, 1997; Finlay, 2009; Sandberg and Dall'Alba, 2009). This viewpoint also acknowledges the interactions amongst the social structures and cultures within the contextual lifeworld and agency (Van Manen, 2007). Underlying the phenomenological perspective, this thesis will explore the perceptions, thoughts and opinions of the Nigerian workers on their lived experience within their organisations' HRM model and their societal lifeworld.

The Nigerian workers' lifeworld is essentially their societal as well as their organisational world of lived experience (Anakwe, 2002; Rich *et al.*, 2013). That is, it is the everyday world in which workers in Nigeria live and experience things naturally and pre-reflectively, through their daily interactions and undertakings (Van Manen, 2007; Rich *et al.*, 2013). Anakwe (2002) contended that Nigerian work arrangements suggests a blend of foreign practices driven by organisations' corporate cultures and strategies, and that the indigenous practices are driven by traditions and the customs of the society. Thus, the Nigerian workers have to balance the conflicting and demanding societal cultural expectations and their work commitments (*ibid.*). Ahiauzu (1989) captured the dilemma that Nigerian workers face in their foreign work world and in society at large below:

“The African worker lives two different patterns of life, with different sets of values, social norms, communication symbols and patterns of human relational processes [...]. At the workplace, he [or she¹] is expected to be endowed with a level of social consciousness that will fit in well in the foreign industrial culture; then, when she or he leaves the workplace and returns to the wider African society in which he [or she] lives, he [or she] changes into another type of being and resumes life as [her or] his self” (Ahiauzu; 1989:15, cited and modified by Anakwe 2002:1044).

It can be inferred from the above quote that Nigerian workers have different lived experiences of the ‘two lifeworlds’ that they work and live in. Ahiauzu (1989) suggested that the two lifeworlds are the societal lifeworld and workplace lifeworld, which are structurally and culturally different, and hence requires different agency from the workers. Furthermore, it can be inferred from Ahiauzu’s (1989) quote that the two lifeworlds elicit different social action and intersubjectivity. Whilst Ahiauzu’s (1989) findings have been corroborated by more recent African studies, there are suggestions that the Nigerian societal norm is so enduring that it influences foreign organisational culture and structure through the workers’ agency and lived experiences (Azolukwan and Perkins, 2009; Owoyemi *et al.*, 2011; Abdukadir, 2012; Adegoroye and Oladejo, 2012; Ajila *et al.*, 2012; Emeti, 2012; Akpan and Akpaetor, 2013; Muogbo, 2013). For example, Anakwe (2002) found that the sense of belonging within the Nigerian community is so strong that in many instances, family members, friends and people from the same tribe or village are usually favoured during recruitment drives in organisations. Emeti (2012) argued that local culture plays a substantial part in the management of an organisation both in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world. Emeti (2012) warned that it would not be right to allow workers to act and work according to the dictates of their particular cultural predisposition in organisations.

Opara (2011) contended that work is in fact a social activity requiring interaction with other people. The reasons for working cannot be assigned to financial factors alone, as people continue to work even when they do not have financial needs (*ibid.*). As such, social rewards, such as respect and admiration from co-workers, cannot be overlooked in assessing the workplace lived experience of Nigerian workers (*ibid.*). More so, being socially situated, the workers’ judgements of their individual efficacy are often

¹ The writer added the ‘or she’ throughout the quote in Ahiauzu, (1989) study as there are Nigerian workers who are women who also face the same cultural dilemma as their men counterpart.

interdependently affected by other workers' supporting or obstructing activities (Bandura, 2000). Beyond the workplace, societal socio-structural and cultural factors, such as economic conditions, customary norms, family structure and religious requirements, affects the workers' efficacy and aspirations, which in turn impact on the workers' behaviour (*ibid.*). Since cultures are not monolithic and fixed entities, as inadvertently represented by cultural typologies, a multi-tribal society such as Nigeria has substantial heterogeneity in communal life, and in the social relationships which percolate workplace lived experiences (Bandura, 2000; Anakwe, 2002). For instance, Opara (2011) submitted that beliefs, norms, rituals, traditions, religion, narratives and sagas define what motivates Nigerian workers and consequently, influences their workplace lived experience. Opara (2011) contended that empirical studies suggest that Nigerian workers have evolved a work culture based on their indigenous thought system and that these systems of thoughts shape both their behaviours and their lived experiences. It is therefore imperative to study the Nigerian workers within their socio-cultural context to be able to identify their preferences, rather than relying on assumptions which are Western in orientation (*ibid.*).

According to Okpara (1984), Nigerian workers are largely working to colonial standards which were established by past Western colonial governments. These standards, however, have no grounding in Nigerian traditional belief systems, customary norms, measures of accomplishment and performance, concept of success or failure, thus leading to the inadequate motivation of workers in the country (*ibid.*). Consequently, conventional Western workplace theories do not provide any appropriate theoretical frameworks for evaluating all of the pertinent socio-cultural factors that shape Nigerian work relationships (Khan and Ackers, 2004). As such, there is a necessity for better social interconnection between workplace structures, cultures, and Nigerian society at large (*ibid.*). Another crucial finding suggested that the workers' workplace lived experience is shaped by both personal and collective agency which is influenced by local socio-cultural factors (Bandura, 2000). It has been argued that individual-based theory for workers' experiences in the Western world has been overemphasised and more attention needs to be given to broader local contextual concerns in managing workplaces' lived experiences in the non-Western world (Khan and Ackers, 2004). Mahdi and Dawson (2007) highlighted that in non-Western nations' lifeworld, the contextual socio-political problems and structural-economic conditions influences the workers' workplace lived experience. Inadequate telecommunication systems, talent pools and workers' educational levels, national

policies and global events, all come together to make a dissimilar business terrain when compared to similar organisations in Western industrialised countries (*ibid.*). As such, it can be inferred that there is a need to develop contextually-focussed theoretical frameworks for improving workers' workplace lived experiences, which will be incorporated into a fully integrated HRM model (*ibid.*). Such an integrated HRM model should take into consideration the working conditions and workers' lifeworld (e.g. history, culture, family dependencies, religious obligations, communal demands, power relations, and the politics of workplace situations) and strategic business objectives (*ibid.*).

In the same vein, earlier Nigeria-based sub-cultural studies by Ahiauzu (1984) and Nzelibe (1986) showed that management practices were influenced by the workers' attitudes and behaviours, which have been in turn informed by workers' lived experiences and societal lifeworld. More recent observations by Owoyemi *et al.* (2011) supported the work of Ahiauzu (1984) and Nzelibe (1986). The authors (e.g. Ahiauzu, 1984; Nzelibe, 1986; Fajana *et al.*, 2011) further suggested that Nigeria's socio-cultural diversity influenced the HRM model in the country. The key assumption in this study, and in particular the theoretical framework, is that the Nigerian workers' behaviours are a product of how they interpret their lifeworld and their perceptions of their lived experiences (Anakwe, 2002). The Nigerian workers' behaviours are, in turn, culture-bound (*ibid.*).

Collectively, the reports of Ahiauzu (1984), Nzelibe (1986), Anakwe (2002), Fajana *et al.* (2011), Emeti (2012) and Muogbo (2013) provided a case for assuming that the lived experience study of skilled workers will provide an insight into the culture and workers' perceptions of the HRM model in the Nigerian banking industry. Following discussions on the guiding philosophical framework, it can be seen how a phenomenological approach will provide a richer interpretative account of the workers' lifeworld and perceptions of their lived experiences. It is important to highlight that there is limited research from Nigeria and Africa as a whole that has used phenomenological research methods as a theoretical framework to understand the lived experiences of workers. With a limited existing literature, this study seeks to address and help to fill the gap in HRM knowledge by providing an empirical study of the Nigerian workers' lived experiences. In order to do this, this chapter has provided a guiding philosophical framework to help guide the reader on how the dimensions of structure, culture and agency are viewed in this study. Having

done this, the next section provides a summary of the key issues discussed in this chapter before engaging with the broader extant literature on the key themes of this study in subsequent chapters.

2.6 Discussions and Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to address the criticisms of some of the existing literature by placing this thesis into the theoretical frameworks that provide a richer insight into the current debates on the topic of this research. By placing the discussions into philosophical frameworks and theoretical dimensions, this chapter has achieved the two objectives identified in Chapter One and sets the tone for further discussions in the subsequent chapters. Moreover, due to the qualitative nature of this thesis, using a suitable social theory will help to understand, assess and design ways in which to examine relationships within social arrangements (Fendt *et al.*, 2014). Thus, a phenomenological paradigm was adopted which views the descriptive and the interpretative approaches as a continuum rather than two discrete positions (Finlay, 2009). The view taken in this chapter was that phenomenology is interpretative while using reduction to highlight the role of the researcher in the social inquiry itself (*ibid.*). The phenomenological approach acknowledged interactions between the three dimensions of agency, structure and culture. Hence, it was observed that phenomenology as well as the dimensions of agency, structure and culture offered a germane theoretical framework for studying the workers' lived experiences where the social actors are viewed as the 'giver' of meaning to structure and culture within the lifeworld (Merleau-Ponty, 1945; Husserl, 1997; Mapp, 2008; Fendt *et al.*, 2014).

However, designing an adequate theoretical framework alone does not fully explain the Nigerian workers' workplace and lifeworld's lived experiences (Adenugba and Ilupeju, 2012; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, to address this gap, there is a need to engage with the existing literature on IHRM, cross-cultural management studies and SHRM within the Nigerian socio-cultural lifeworld context. In particular, there is a need to understand the role of the Nigerian workers' agency in shaping the HRM model in the country. Thus, the next two literature review chapters will critique the existing debates on convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence and the SHRM model in order to explore how the HRM model influences the workers' agency and lived experiences within their 'two lifeworlds'. By discussing the IHRM debates and SHRM model within Nigeria, this study will place the workers' lived experience into the

workplace ‘structural’ context. Hence, it will illustrate how the constraining and facilitating structures within a workplace shapes the workers’ perceptions of their lived experience therein. To achieve this, Chapter Three will engage with the extant literature on HRM, IHRM and cross-cultural management in order to understand how the workers’ perceptions of their workplace lived experiences influences their agency within the contextual, structural and cultural factors confronting them. Thus, by discussing the existing studies on IHRM and cross-cultural management debates on the HRM model in Africa, Chapter Three will attempt to close the knowledge gap on workplace structural and cultural nuances that influences worker agency and their lived experiences within a non-Western context.

CHAPTER THREE: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MODEL IN AFRICA: WORKERS' AGENCY AND LIFEWORLD EXPERIENCES

3.1 Introduction

An introductory background to this study was presented in Chapter One, in which the research questions on workers' lived experiences were generated and these questions now need to be addressed through the analysis of the existing literature and data findings. Chapter Two theorised on the workers' perceptions of their lived experiences and presented a phenomenological framework and three theoretical dimensions to guide the literature review, methodology and fieldwork chapters. As discussed in Chapter Two, the interactions between agency, structure and culture dimensions have shaped the debates around the nature of HRM, IHRM and SHRM. Furthermore, Chapter Two has theorised the lifeworld and lived experiences within an African context, thus providing a framework for the discussions in this chapter. Additionally, Chapter Two has addressed the two objectives of this study, that is, *'to evaluate how a phenomenological framework can be used to understand Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experience under the HRM and the SHRM models'* and *'to understand how theoretical dimensions of structure, culture and agency affect Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived'*. However, there is a need to discuss Nigerian workers' lived experiences under both the HRM and SHRM models. The aim of this chapter and the next is to engage with the broader extant literature on HRM, IHRM, cross-cultural management and SHRM, in order to understand how the workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experiences influences their agency within the contextual, structural and cultural factors confronting them.

The SHRM model will be discussed further in Chapter Four to illustrate how organisations integrate the HRM model with their organisational strategies in order to improve their organisational performance (Kiessling and Harvey, 2005; Hoorn, 2015; Hite, 2015). Thus, the focus and aim of this chapter is to discuss the IHRM debates in tandem with cross-cultural management and the HRM model in Africa within Section 3.3. An overview of the perceptions of the HRM model in Africa will be discussed under Section 3.4, and in turn, Section 3.5 presents an overview of the HRM model in Nigeria. Finally, Section 3.6 provides a summary discussion of all of the crucial points that arose in the chapter. Before presenting the discussions in this chapter as highlighted above, it is important to discuss some terms of reference of HRM, IHRM and SHRM in the next

section. It is imperative to define the terms of reference in order to set the scene for the discussions in the subsequent chapters.

3.2 Terms of Reference

It is important to understand what HRM, IHRM, cross-cultural management and SHRM entails (Mammana and Somantri, 2014). HRM is viewed as the organisation's processes designed to manage the workers' performance and experience in relation to laying down policies and procedures (Cogin, 2012; Syed and Kramar, 2012; Abugre, 2013; Mammana and Somantri, 2014). The human resources of organisations are portrayed as being valued assets that need to be managed both efficiently and effectively in order to achieve an organisations' strategic objectives (Cogin, 2012; Mammana and Somantri, 2014). Moreover, the HRM model is growing in significance due to the fast changing workplace environment and diverse workers' needs, all of which need to be harnessed to achieve any organisational strategic objectives (Cogin, 2012). As a result, HRM initiatives aimed at enhancing workers' workplace lived experience have universal acceptance, although the workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experience varies from individual to individual (Cogin, 2012). To explain HRM practices, two prominent models have been advanced for discussion, which are strategic human resource management (SHRM) and international human resource management (IHRM) (Mammana and Somantri, 2014; Beugelsdijk *et al.*, 2015; DesAutels *et al.*, 2015). IHRM and SHRM will be introduced to set the scene for the discussions on how HRM model affects the agency of workers and consequently, their workplace lived experience. In this study, IHRM is defined as; “a *branch of management studies that investigates the design of and effects of organisational human resource practices in cross- cultural contexts*” (Peltonen, 2006:523). From Peltonen's (2006) definition, one can infer that there is a link between IHRM and cross-cultural management. As a consequence, cross-cultural management is viewed in this thesis as the management of workers' behaviour, attitude, lived experiences as well as the social interactions of workers of different cultural backgrounds in organisations (Peltonen, 2006; Adler, 2008; Kavar, 2012). The IHRM model has become considerably more important because of the spread and effect of globalisation, from the economic, legal and political, to the social and cultural context, as well as improvements in technology and communication channels (Abugre, 2013; Kang and Shen, 2014; Hoorn, 2015).

SHRM is defined in this thesis as: “*an approach to the management of human resources that provides a strategic framework to support long-term business goals and outcomes.*”

The approach is concerned with longer-term people issues and macro-concerns about structure, quality, culture, values, commitment, and, matching resources to future need” (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, 2012). From this definition, it can be inferred that the SHRM model is concerned about long-term HRM policies and practices which focuses on organisational structure and culture, and the need to match the human resources to future organisational requirements (Ajila *et al.*, 2012).

Moving on, the next section will give an overview of the key debates on the IHRM model. The rationale is that most of the current debates on the HRM model in Africa have been informed by an IHRM framework, which in itself has been informed by the importance of cross-cultural studies and the role of national cultures in shaping the HRM model outside the Western world (Hofstede, 1991; Anakwe, 2002; Kamoche, 2011).

3.3 International Human Resource Management Debates and Cross-Cultural Management Overview

This section discusses the key IHRM debates in a non-Western context in order to illustrate how global structures and cultural factors shape the agency of workers and consequently, their perceptions of their workplace lived experience. Therefore, it is important to provide a starting point to discuss key international socio-cultural factors which influences on workers’ perceptions of their workplace lived experiences and agency in the context of the HRM debates. However, it is not the intention within this thesis to discuss IHRM models in relation to managing expatriates and organisations across national boundaries (i.e. the ERPG framework – ethnocentric, polycentric, regiocentric and geocentric; the Integrative Model - exportive, adaptive and integrative approaches; ‘soft’ model; ‘hard’ model) as these models have been extensively discussed by management writers (e.g. Taylor, *et al.*, 1996; Heenan and Perlmutter, 1979; Brewster *et al.*, 2005; Osland and Osland, 2005; Adler, 2008; Kavar, 2012; Harzing and Pinnington, 2014; Kang and Shen, 2014; Beugelsdijk *et al.*, 2015; DesAutels, *et al.*, 2015). Notwithstanding, it is widely cited that the swift pace and ease with which businesses are conducted across national boundaries has increased and that this global phenomenon has highlighted the importance of IHRM (Fitzgerald and Howe-Walsh, 2008). This viewpoint has led to debate around the integration of HRM practices in the non-Western world with those of the industrialised nations as a set of ‘universal best practices’ spread everywhere irrespective of national context. The word ‘convergence’ was coined by Kerr *et al.* (1962) in their seminal book titled ‘Kerr: Industrialism and

Industrial Man'. Advocates of the convergence concept (e.g. Kerr *et al.*, 1962; Ritzer, 2000; Ralston, 2008; Kavar, 2012) argued that the main drivers of the HRM model are prevailing economic factors and globalisation which will lead emerging economies to converge around industrialised nations' work practices and behavioural systems as they embrace free market capitalism and technology. Ritzer (2000) argued that the HRM model is also converging due to the spread of globalisation and technology which is impacting on workers' social interactions, agency and identity as a result of changes in the socio-cultural and structural contexts. Modern organisations are rationalizing their traditional HRM approaches and replacing them with universal best practices which are focussed on delivering efficiency and formalised social control (*ibid.*). Thus, the sub-section 3.3.1 will engage with the convergence debate in detail in order to illustrate how Western HRM policies and practices influence workers experiences in a non-Western context.

3.3.1 The Convergence Debate in IHRM and Cross-Cultural Management

The aim of this sub-section is to engage with the IHRM convergence debate. Achieving the aim set out in this sub-section will demonstrate how Western practices shapes the workers' agency and workplace experiences in non-Western countries. The convergence debate holds that certain HRM policies and practices are essential for the control and management of workers' agency in any economy, regardless of the context in which an organisation operates (Kerr *et al.*, 1962; Eisenstadt, 1973; Levitt, 1983; Prentice, 1990; Ritzer, 2000). Most HRM studies (e.g. Hoftsedde, 1991; Anakwe, 2002; Peltonen, 2006; Kavar, 2012) in non-Western settings have been informed by IHRM debates and cross-cultural management. Hence, research into the IHRM model and cross-cultural management provides an insight into organisational behaviour and the workers' workplace lived experiences across multiple cultural contexts (Adler, 2008; Fitzgerald and Howe-Walsh, 2008; Kavar, 2012). Cross-cultural proponents and divergent theorists (e.g. Laurent, 1983; Hofstede, 1991; Whitley, 2000; Hickson and Pugh, 2001; Adler, 2008; Kavar, 2012) contended that all countries have their own distinct set of underlying norms, morals and beliefs, and that these are revealed in the ways that communities function, the economy operates, how people work and how they are managed at work. Divergence proponents (e.g. Whitley, 2000; Hickson and Pugh, 2001) argued that HRM practices are significantly influenced by structures and cultural factors in each national context. Indigenous traditions, structures and cultural networks, and also workforce

attitude, all place serious limitations on the extent of convergence and may well lead to growing levels of divergence (Adler, 2008).

According to management writers (e.g. Dowling *et al.*, 2008; Marchington and Wilkinson, 2008; Kang and Shen, 2014), HRM entails the activities undertaken by organisations to manage its workers efficiently and effectively. These activities include: human resource planning; staffing; performance management; development and learning; reward and motivation (*ibid.*). IHRM has similar dimensions to HRM within national boundaries, but operate on a bigger scale with more multifarious strategic contemplations, more complex organisation and control demands, and some supplementary HR functions (Brewster *et al.*, 2005; Beugelsdijk *et al.*, 2015). IHRM is thus viewed as the interaction between human resource activities, a diverse workforce and the countries of operation (Dowling *et al.*, 2008; DesAutels, *et al.*, 2015). Deresky (2002) observed that in the twenty-first century, workers are being asked to function in more and more multifarious, interdependent, and dynamic global terrains. Researchers in IHRM are primarily interested in the influence of socio-cultural differences and how these differences shape both the way that organisations are managed and the workers' lived experience therein (DesAutels, *et al.*, 2015). Whilst cultural values and norms influence the effect of globalisation on workers worldwide, culture predominantly curtails or promotes the workers' agency and their experience of both their workworld and their lifeworld (DesAutels *et al.*, 2015; Hoorn, 2015). Furthermore, in Western nations, the importance of culture has been emphasised as socio-cultural factors influence how workers use information technologies to raise concerns, build coalitions and seek redress for their concerns (Beugelsdijk *et al.*, 2015; DesAutels, *et al.*, 2015). Thus, the next sub-section 3.3.2 will discuss in detail the role of culture and contextual structures in shaping the workers' agency and workplace lived experiences.

3.3.2 The Divergence Debate in IHRM and Cross-Cultural Management

The aim of this sub-section is to discuss the role of cultural and contextual social structures in shaping workers' lived experiences both in the personal lifeworld and in their workworld. This is important because cultural values are one of the key drivers of human behaviour and hence, are important constructs in the IHRM model and other aspects of organisational behaviour (Hoorn, 2015). An awareness of cultural values helps in our understanding of workers' attitudes and behaviour, and of the different features of organisational behaviour and culture that is a product of national culture (*ibid.*).

Theoretically, in cross-cultural management, workers' value systems and, particularly, cultural differences are often perceived as a constraint or an opportunity for which organisations need to adapt to or exploit (DesAutels *et al.*, 2015; Hoorn, 2015). To illustrate the extent to which workers' workplace values and attitudes are changing, Hite (2015) argued for the need to examine the individual workers' work ethic. Work ethic is a set of cultural beliefs and attitudes that reflects the workers' core value of work and perception of work importance (*ibid.*). A worker's work ethics is influenced by their value system, which is an integral part of their culture, so when we say that culture differs, what we are invariably saying is that cultural values differ (DesAutels, *et al.*, 2015). Consequently, the culture of a nation creates a set of cultural values for which workers in that country conform to, and these will in turn establish country-specific rules for what is valued (DesAutels, *et al.*, 2015; Hoorn, 2015; Hite, 2015). Due to the importance of national culture on organisations and workers' activities, many scholars (e.g. Hofstede, 1991; Tayeb, 2000; Stonehouse *et al.*, 2004; Trompenaar and Hampden-Turner, 2005) have carried out extensive comparisons of the world's cultural dimension. Hence, one of the key debates in IHRM and cross-cultural management is that concepts that work well in Western cultures may not work as well elsewhere (Ariss, 2014). All in all, structures (non-cultural) and cultural factors combine in complex multiple intertwined ways with HRM processes in order to shape both the workers' agency and their workplace lived experiences (Daft, 2003; Ariss, 2014; DesAutels, *et al.*, 2015; Hoorn, 2015; Hite, 2015).

Daft (2003) argued that the world as we know it is going through remarkable and extensive changes. These changes can be identified by probing the components of the global structural environment (*ibid.*). Daft (2003) suggested that the global structural environment includes technology, socio-cultural factors, economy, religion, legal-political and international forces. As a result, two more debates of IHRM has been identified which of are neither the divergence nor convergence model (Ralston *et al.*, 1993; Gupta and Wang, 2003). The two additional debates of IHRM are 'cross-vergence' and 'trans-vergence'. The next Sub-section 3.3.3, will further discuss the cross-vergence and trans-vergence debates within an IHRM framework and cross-cultural management.

3.3.3 The Cross-vergence and Trans-vergence Debates in IHRM and Cross-Cultural Management

The aim of this sub-section is to move past the IHRM convergence versus divergence debate. This will be achieved by discussing the cross-vergence and trans-vergence debates

in order to explore in broader detail, the various structural and cultural factors that shape workers' experiences. First, it is important to define what constitutes a cross-vergence debate. Ralston *et al.* (1993) coined the term 'cross-vergence' to demonstrate how the combination and dynamic interaction of socio-cultural factors, religions, political factors, economy and technological factors drives the development of a new and unique set of value systems amongst the individual members of a community. In Ralston *et al.*'s (1993) study, the term 'cross-vergence' described a phenomenon that is neither convergence nor divergence, but is an 'in between' in the convergence and divergence debate. Gupta and Wang (2003) also proposed a new perspective to capture the influence of globalisation on organisations – 'trans-vergence' in the context of studying emerging markets. According to Gupta and Wang (2003), while cross-vergence aims to integrate the forces of technological advancements and economic forces (connected with convergence) and enduring socio-cultural factors (connected with divergence); there is an additional alternative option in circumstances when managers must incorporate global models with their contextual and organisational cultures intact. The importance of these components stems from the fact that understanding the local socio-cultural, religions, traditional and legal-political business setting can give managers an advantage in competitive industries (Deresky, 2002; Peltonen, 2006). According to Deresky (2002), socio-cultural variables include social constructs such as religion, education and languages, whilst cultural aspects include values, norms and beliefs. Managing workers within a diverse global socio-cultural context presents a range of challenges (Peng, 2009; Chung *et al.*, 2012; Ariss, 2014). For example, two notable constructs of language and religion present major constraints to implementing global IHRM standards (Peng, 2009; Chung *et al.*, 2012). There are approximately 6,000 languages spoken in the world (Peng, 2009). Recent globalisation trends have called for the use of a single common language (*ibid.*). This call brings with it some problems as English-speaking countries enjoy economic dominance because they contribute 40% of global output, however, native English-speaking people only account for 6% of the world's population (*ibid.*).

Religion is another complex social construct which shapes a worker's agency and lived experiences with 85% of the world's population subscribing to some religious beliefs (Okpara and Wynn, 2008; Peng, 2009; Chung *et al.*, 2012; Ariss, 2014). Deresky (2002) contended that the religious views of a society are typically so influential that they can transcend cultural factors, thereby influencing workers' agency and shaping their

perceptions of their lifeworld. Management writers (e.g. Hofstede, 1991; Peltonen, 2006; Ariss, 2014; Beugelsdijk *et al.*, 2015; Hite, 2015; Hoorn, 2015) contended that the differences in the national culture affects firms in many ways which are widely seen as central to IHRM. Conversely, Deresky (2002) and Azolukwam and Perkins (2009) argued that generalisation in a cultural profile may result in the estimation or categorising of national character as many countries consist of diverse sub-cultures. These sub-cultures' constituents may conform to different levels within the national character (Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Chung *et al.*, 2012; Ariss, 2014). To avoid the mistake of stereotyping, good managers should treat workers as individuals (Deresky, 2002). In the same vein, culture has been found to manifest more in workers' behaviour and in their lived experience, than at a national level (Deresky, 2002; Fitzgerald and Howe-Walsh, 2008). Similarly, legal-political factors influence work arrangements and workers' experience at both the national and international level (Chung *et al.*, 2012; Ariss, 2014).

The legal-political platform of a country includes government regulations at the local, state and federal levels as well as political activities planned to moderate an organisation's behaviours and in general, to shape workers' lifeworld (Daft, 2003; Ariss, 2014; Harzing and Pinnington, 2014). The political structure of the government of any nation - whether democratic, communist, dictatorial or theocracy - imposes varying degrees of constraints and liberty on an organisation's HRM processes, workers' agency and behaviour (Deresky, 2002; Peltonen, 2006; Ariss, 2014). It is thus the managers' responsibility to understand how the legal and political structure affects the organisations' HRM practices and their workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experience (Deresky, 2002; Osland and Osland, 2005; Kang and Shen, 2014; Beugelsdijk *et al.*, 2015). Jones *et al.* (2000) argued that worldwide political and legal factors are a product of the varied and changing political and legal systems of the various nations. Recently, two significant changes occurred in the global political structure (*ibid.*). First, developing countries (e.g. countries in Asia and Africa) have moved away from totalitarian and dictatorship styles of governance towards more democratic rule in many parts of the world starting with the collapse of the Soviet Union (*ibid.*). Second, changes in the political structures have resulted in shifts away from command and mixed economies to a more free-market economic model (*ibid.*). These economic shifts have led to Western organisations operating in these new markets, thereby bringing Western cultural practices along with them (Jones *et al.*, 2000; Chung *et al.*, 2012; Ariss, 2014). Globalisation and organisations

with an international presence are calling for the increased standardisation of the IHRM model; however the multiplicity of the world's structures and cultural diversity is pushing towards differentiation as well (Anyim *et al.*, 2011). These contextual complexities and their socio-political nature further precipitates the need to better understand workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experience and actions in an attempt to explain how the HRM model can be used to meet an organisations' economic objectives (Dowling *et al.*, 2008; Anyim *et al.*, 2011; Hite, 2015). Thus, from a cross-cultural management perspective, the IHRM model is shaped by the agency of workers which is in turn influenced by socio-cultural factors within national boundaries (Beugelsdijk *et al.*, 2015; Hite, 2015). As a result, the IHRM model reflects the culture of the host countries as well as international best practices i.e. elements of convergence, divergence, cross-vergence and trans-vergence approach in IHRM debates (Peltonen, 2006; Ariss, 2014).

Having discussed the various global social structures and contextual cultures under an IHRM debate, it is now important to situate the ongoing discussions on IHRM in this chapter into a more focused African context. Thus, this chapter will illustrate how African socio-cultural factors and thought processes shapes the IHRM and HRM approaches on the continent. This is imperative, because as argued by Kamoche (2011), most debates on the IHRM and HRM model in Africa over-emphasize on comparative analyses between Africa and Western nations, which focus on a narrow scope of cross-cultural management problems. Kamoche (2011) contended that most of these debates reflect the ethnocentric concerns of multinational organisations and how they transfer managerial expertise and technology to their subsidiaries, rather than the underlying African thought systems. Hence, this thesis will progress to discussing HRM debates in Africa with a focus on Nigeria. The sections below will provide discussions on how socio-cultural factors and other contextual structures shape the HRM model in Africa using the existing convergence, divergence, cross-vergence and trans-vergence debates. Following the discussions on the IHRM debates and cross-cultural management, Section 3.4 will provide a more detailed explanation of the HRM model in Africa by engaging with the effects of Western practices and local traditions on the HRM processes. Therefore, the next section will provide a contextual focus on this study.

3.4 An Overview of the HRM Model in Africa

A key issue identified in the discussions above is the need to move past the comparative analyses of Western HRM practices to African processes which are based on a limited

scope of cross-cultural management (Kamoche, 2011). The current approaches to understanding how workers in Africa are managed are often structured within a negative ‘developing/developed’ world concept (Anakwe, 2002; Jackson, 2002; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). The negative viewpoint depicts a pejorative view of management in Africa and assumes the need for the HRM model within Africa to develop towards the more ‘developed’ Western approach (Adeleye, 2011; Kamoche, 2011; Horwitz *et al.*, 2012; Abugre, 2013; Abubakar, *et al.*, 2014). To address these issues, this section will provide a more contextual focus on how workers are managed in Africa. Thus, the aim of this section is to provide the social structures and cultural factors that influence the HRM model, work arrangements, workers’ agency and their perceived lived experiences in Africa. This section will also achieve an additional aim of placing the HRM model in Africa in context of IHRM debates and cross-cultural studies.

Khan and Ackers (2004) maintained that established Western HRM approaches are not always appropriate theoretical frameworks for examining all of the germane social structures and cultural factors that shape the sub-Saharan African employment relationship and workers’ lived experience. From a cross-cultural viewpoint, it has been argued that Western HRM models are not always suitable for organisations in Africa (Adeleye, 2011; Horwitz *et al.*, 2012; Abugre, 2013). Khan and Ackers (2004) proposed incorporating some fundamentals of the ‘African Social System’ into formal HRM policies and practices. This assertion contradicts Jackson’s (2002) position that an HRM model in Africa does not need to be modelled like or infused into a Western HRM framework. As can be deduced from the above argument, as well as shown in later sections in this chapter, the debate surrounding an ideal ‘African HRM framework’ remains contentious and far-reaching. The HRM model in Africa is now receiving increasing attention in wider academic debates, although there are still obvious gaps in the international and comparative management literature (Adeleye, 2011; Joarder *et al.*, 2011; Kamoche, 2011; Abubakar, *et al.*, 2014). Joarder *et al.* (2011) argued that there is limited knowledge of how the HRM model in Africa affects the workers’ perceptions of their workplace lived experiences; their attitudes; their behaviours; their thought processes; and how it shapes their agency. This gap in the academic literature implies that more research should be done to understand how the HRM model in Africa affects a variety of work-related attitudes and behaviours (Jones *et al.*, 2011; Abubakar, *et al.*, 2014). It is therefore

not unexpected that there are several misconceptions about the HRM model in Africa (Adeleye, 2011).

The misconceptions about the HRM model in Africa are made manifest by the tendency of some commentators to group all of Africa's fifty-four states into a single homogeneous entity (Jackson, 2002; Adeleye, 2011; Horwitz *et al.*, 2012). However, Africa is characterised by diverse social structures and cultures across many dimensions (Adeleye, 2011; Horwitz, 2012). Thus, the diversities observed in Africa reflects many dimensions such as the legacy of European colonisation; varying levels of socio-economic growth; different states of political affairs; numerous cultural and ethnic groupings; and several traditions and religious memberships (Adeleye, 2011; Kamoche, 2011; Horwitz, 2012; Abubakar *et al.*, 2014). The history of European colonialism is perhaps the most obvious of all of the dimensions of diversity in Africa as this affects work arrangements which, consequently, shape the workers' agency and perceptions of their workplace lived experiences (Adeleye, 2011). By the same token, for African workers, the tribal group is an important source of social affiliation which serves as a key reference point for self-identification and this in turn influences their agency and their perception of their workplace lived experience (Nyambegera, 2002; Kamoche, 2011; Abubakar *et al.*, 2014). It is important to note that while tribal groups help African workers to self-identify, it frequently creates a source of conflict between workers in the workplace (Nyambegera, 2002; Abugre, 2013). Nyambegera (2002) posited that some African cultural values are group leaning and paternalistic in orientation, thereby reinforcing the exclusion of tribal diversity in the work place. For example, Nyambegera (2002) highlighted that those in positions of authority are pressurised to employ their relatives or to assist them in gaining employment elsewhere. Hence, considering the diverse cultural linguistic groups (tribes) on the continent, Nyambegera (2002) suggested that the HRM model in Africa will benefit from an 'inclusion policy'. An inclusion policy entails the employment of qualified workers irrespective of their ethnic or tribal affiliation in order to take advantage of their inherent differences for the advancement of organisational benefits (Nyambegera, 2002; Kamoche, 2011; Abugre, 2013). For an inclusion policy to be implemented, African organisations must make it mandatory for their managers to steer away from reliance on kinsfolk or a '*wa kwetu*' (Swahili word for 'of us') mind-set to embracing a more diverse workforce and to tap into cultural differences to enhance any organisational objectives (Nyambegera, 2002; Adeleye, 2011; Kamoche, 2011).

According to Khan and Ackers (2004), HRM theories and practices in Africa have been framed by the European colonial belief system and capitalist approaches of management. Before the colonial era, Africa had its own HRM models that were usually small in magnitude and identical in terms of their membership (Nyambegera, 2002; Khan and Ackers, 2004; Joarder *et al.*, 2011). These traditional HRM models in Africa had their own method of selecting, recruiting, compensating and preserving discipline amongst the workers (Khan and Ackers, 2004). However, pre-colonial socio-economic interactions between sub-Saharan Africans and Arab traders brought about a substantial Arab influence in the form of Islamic law and Muslim beliefs on the workers' agency and perceptions of their lifeworld (Nyambegera, 2002; Khan and Ackers, 2004). The traditional African beliefs and customs as well as the Arabian cultural influence have endured through the dominant HRM theories and practices which were passed on from colonial solutions to the challenges of capitalist production on the continent (Khan and Ackers, 2004). Hence, analysing workers' workplace lived experiences solely in relation to the social reality of Africa's colonial history, and overlooking the significance of the social realities that characterised its pre-colonial experiences would obscure our understanding of the workers' agentic actions and their lifeworld (Nyambegera, 2002; Adeleye, 2011). Khan and Ackers (2004) argued that the relative success that the European colonialists had in addressing the economic management problems in Africa can be directly linked to the capability of the colonial empire to enforce their idea of time and space on the agency and thought systems of African workers, than to the ingenuity of the solutions themselves.

In a more recent global economic context, Western-inspired capitalism has failed to achieve the desired impact between capital and labour in Africa as it did during the Western industrial revolution (Khan and Ackers, 2004; Joarder *et al.*, 2011; Kamcohe, 2011). Khan and Ackers (2004) argued that as the capitalist approach to economic reforms continued, the autonomy of the African workers has depleted without changing their internal logic, and the adult male workers have been forced to take up waged employment without the system providing support for women, children, and the elderly and non-working men. From the above, one can deduce that while the capitalist approach addresses the economic concerns of organisations to some extent, it fails to cater for wider socio-cultural and traditional ethics enshrined in the African workers' thought systems and perceptions of their lifeworld (*ibid.*). Thus, in the face of globalising pressures, it has

been debated that African organisations would depart from their traditional HRM approaches to embracing new Western HRM policies and practices (Adeleye, 2011; Joarder *et al.*, 2011; Horwitz, 2012; Abubakar *et al.*, 2014). In many cases, Western HRM policies and practices have been found to have swiftly percolated in African organisations, leading to debates around the nature of HRM in Africa (Adeleye, 2011). It is thereby imperative to discuss further the nature of the HRM model in Africa by engaging with the literature on convergence/divergence debates. To do this, the next four sections will offer further insights into the cross-cultural HRM debates on convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence sections. First, the following sub-section will discuss the convergence debate of the HRM model in Africa.

3.4.1 A Convergence Debate

There is a need to align the discussions above with the existing convergence/divergence debates in order to better illustrate how the various contextual socio-cultural factors and universal Western ideologies shape HRM policies and practices in Africa. It is equally important to understand the factors shaping HRM approaches in Africa itself because as stated earlier, ultimately, all organisations irrespective of national context, will adopt a set of universal best practices improving the workers' lived experiences and consequently, its efficiency (Kerr *et al.*, 1962). Mufune (2003) also reported that the convergence or the universalist perspectives hold that work orientations are not particularly influenced by culture. Work orientations are the behavioural tendencies that workers have towards intersubjective relationships with other workers through the workers' collective agency and shared values (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Ratner, 2000; Mufune, 2003; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). For example, in sub-Saharan African countries, it is not easy to delineate what constitutes an indigenous HRM practice due to the historical European colonial experience (Jackson *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, Jackson *et al.* (2008) contended that what is usually referred to as indigenous African management practices and is often perceived negatively, may in fact be a post-colonial influenced HRM practice. By implication, this infers a convergent values system with that of the colonial administrators (*ibid.*). This viewpoint is corroborated by an earlier study by Anakwe (2002) stating that major organisations in Africa have dominant Western HRM practices which suggests that local HRM model were converging with universal best practices. The changes in HRM practices to more universal best practices have led to changes in work arrangements with consequences on the workers' agency, perceptions, lifestyles and lived experiences which

have become more Westernised (Prentice, 1990; Rennie, and McGee, 2012; McMahon, *et al.*, 2014).

Personnel management was the basic administrative tool in sub-Saharan Africa until the early 1980's (Khan and Ackers, 2004). According to Khan and Ackers (2004), in the mid-1980's, the sub-Saharan African countries were burdened with a serious ongoing economic crisis necessitating the employment of foreign capital to avert fiscal collapse. Access to foreign capital was contingent upon the African countries adopting and implementing certain neo-liberal fiscal programmes promulgated by the USA and the UK (*ibid.*). However, with changes in national policies such as the introduction of Economic Recovery and Structural Adjustment Programmes (ERP/SAP), the HRM model emerged on the sub-Saharan African employment scene (*ibid.*). The ERP/SAP were economic reform initiatives with foreign Western principles sponsored by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the 1980's in Africa with the intention of creating a competitive market environment, improving workers' productivity and stimulating organisational efficiency (Khan and Ackers, 2004; Okpara and Wynn, 2008; Oshikoya, 2008). The 'new' Western HRM approach did not lead to a more harmonious convergence, but instead, the HRM rhetoric brought into sharper focus an alternative, enduring socio-cultural reality rooted in indigenous traditional structures based on local cultural values and the workers' perceptions of their societal lived experiences (Khan and Ackers, 2004). For example, in Nigeria, Obasanjo administration's liberalisation and privatisation policy steered the economy in the direction of a market-oriented system leading to the emergence of a Western HRM model which impacted on the workers' lived experiences in the country (Okpara and Wynn, 2008). Okpara and Wynn (2008) suggested that because the management of Nigerian workers' agency was pivotal to the successful implementation of the privatisation policy, this implied that organisations had to look beyond the borders of the country for management techniques and skills. The result of the privatization policy was the importation of foreign and mostly Western management practices (*ibid.*).

Apart from the impact of colonisation and the various economic reform initiatives, globalisation has been observed to accelerate convergence through supply elasticity, new technology, the growth of multinational organisations and the increased mobility of labour (Khan and Ackers, 2004; Horwitz *et al.*, 2006; Harzing and Pinnington, 2014; Kang and Shen, 2014). McMahon *et al.* (2014) suggested that as globalisation leads to

more converging HRM policies and practices, organisations will need to reconsider their approach to managing workers as the new generation of workers will quickly move on from a job if they do not feel fulfilled. Existing studies (e.g. Gupta and Wang, 2004; Beugelsdijk *et al.*, 2015; DesAutels, *et al.*, 2015) showed that globalisation can produce two extreme results. First, globalisation can lead to the homogenisation of strategic organisational behaviour as workers move away from traditional national beliefs and practices embracing common universal values with regard to economic and work-related activities (*ibid.*). Consequently, the shift in the workers' value system affects their agency and how they perceive their lived experiences both at the workplace and in larger society (Khan and Ackers, 2004; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Adeleye, 2011). Second, globalisation can promote continued diversity, in other words; globalisation is about leveraging on diversity in a progressively borderless world to achieve unique positions and competitive advantages (Gupta and Wang, 2004). HRM scholars (e.g. Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Ariss, 2014; Kang and Shen, 2014; Beugelsdijk *et al.*, 2015) argued that convergence tends to be toward anglo-neo-liberalism or from industrialised Western nations to less industrialised countries, extending Western HRM practices into a worldwide ways of doing things. In addition, emerging countries may also contribute to the effectiveness of universal HRM practices before passing them on to the more-developed countries or before being espoused into a global practice (Horwitz *et al.*, 2006). Hence, a convergence perspective tends towards universally valid HRM practices, but the idea of managing people to a common standard has the potential to create more problems than its intended solution (Khan and Ackers, 2004; Horwitz *et al.*, 2006; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Ariss, 2014).

Some arguments for the differences found in the workers' behaviours, agency and their lived experiences are linked to cultural differences not necessarily unique to African workers (Anakwe, 2002; Mufune, 2003; Ayittey, 2010; Abubakar *et al.*, 2014). For example, the claim that African managers work better in private organisations than in public organisations is expected as it applies to managers in several cultures (Mufune, 2003). The reason is that it is believed that private organisations are more efficient than public organisations, not because of culture, but because they are more exposed to competitive markets, have relative sovereignty from the state (political constraints) and different criteria for appraising performance standards (*ibid.*). A further example is the suggestion that African managers are more 'personalistic', territorial and conservative in

the workplace than their Western counterparts (*ibid.*). According to Mufune (2003), personalistic tendencies or personalism refers to a situation where emphasis is placed primarily on the individual workers as against addressing factors that support organisations in achieving its set objectives or performance goals. Mufune (2003) argued that many Western managers in token and powerless positions will exhibit the same workplace attitudes (e.g. personalism, territorial and conservatism) and a lack of innovation as long as they lack opportunities, numerical representation and more significantly, power at work. In fact, personalism, territoriality and conservatism are not necessarily linked to African culture *per se*, but to social structure and in particular, to the individuals' relationship to the structure of opportunities and constraints within a given organisational milieu (*ibid.*). Mufune (2003) further argued that culture is not easy to measure and compare; this limits the extent to which researchers can correlate culture to managerial ethics.

The argument that African workers' behaviour is different from those of workers elsewhere is contentious as illustrated in the above discussions and in the seminal works of scholars (e.g. Parker and Subramaniam, 1964; Rainey *et al.*, 1976; Thomas and Schonken, 1998; Mufune, 2003). However, there is a growing general acknowledgement that national and organisational cultures have an appreciable impact on the structure and management of organisations, and thus, on the workers' workplace lived experience (Hofstede, 1991; Blunt and Jones, 1992; Milikić, 2009). The workers' perceptions of their lived experiences are shaped by their agency, values and attitudes which conforms to their nation's cultural legacy rather than to its geographical location or regional economic affiliation (Hofstede, 1991; Milikić, 2009). Hofstede (1991) argued that the 'taken for granted' way of life is enduring and resistant to change, thus, culture is particularly important to HRM practices. Given these arguments are in support of the role of national structural institutions and cultures in shaping HRM practices, it is therefore important to engage further with the extant literature on the divergence view of the HRM model from an African perspective. To do this, the next section will engage with the divergence perspectives. The purpose of the next sub-section is to provide alternative arguments to the convergence debate and more specifically, to present the role of national socio-cultural factors in differentiating the HRM practices in Africa.

3.4.2 A Divergence Argument

The aim of this sub-section is to discuss the role of the national socio-cultural context in shaping HRM policies and practices in order to advance the debate on the nature of HRM in Africa. Divergence proponents (e.g. Laurent, 1983; Hickson and Pugh, 2001; Fitzgerald and Howe-Walsh, 2008; Kavar, 2012) argued that socio-cultural and political factors are the main driving forces that influences workers' values and perceptions within a country, and not any economic forces or technological improvement. National and regional cultural forces will keep shaping value and diversity among even fully industrialised nations (Laurent, 1983; Fitzgerald and Howe-Walsh, 2008; Kavar, 2012). The divergence viewpoint is consistent with the central theme of cross-cultural theorists (e.g. Hofstede, 1991; Whitley, 2000; Adler, 2008) who assert that all management practices and workers' lived experiences are culturally influenced. Culture is learned by the workers during childhood through their agency and experience in society, where customs are established and expectations of standard behaviour defined (Hofstede, 1991; DesAutels, *et al.*, 2015). Once culture has been defined, any subsequent changes that arise are practices whereby the underlying values remain intact (Kavar, 2012). Therefore, culture explains more of the variance in work-related values and attitudes of workers and different organisational processes which are familiar to the members of a society (Adler, 2008; Kavar, 2012; DesAutels, *et al.*, 2015). However, the assumption in the past of the European colonialists was that the management and HRM practices of Western nations can be transplanted to any non-Western country with the relevant training and appropriate implementation processes (Glover and Trivedi, 2007). These assumptions have been robustly challenged from a cross-cultural perspective, and more so, from the observation that different countries have unique organisational systems, work arrangements and workers' lived experiences (*ibid.*). Glover and Trivedi (2007) contended that the divergence of HRM practices remains persistent due to socio-cultural diversity, different investment models and financial institutional approaches, and political and historical features that have propelled the varied stages of economic development. In summary, it can be inferred that national culture as well as non-cultural factors (e.g. financial institutions, politics and historical experience) is important as are resilient values in promoting a HRM model that is divergent in perspective (Hofstede, 1991; Anakwe, 2002; Gupta and Wang, 2004).

The HRM model in Africa has been misunderstood and sometimes presented in a negative way, especially when compared against Western HRM ideological assumptions (Jackson, 2002; Jackson *et al.*, 2008; Ayittey, 2010). In the same vein, the argument that African culture is not supportive of entrepreneurship has been challenged by a better understanding of cross-cultural management (Mufune, 2003; Jackson *et al.*, 2008). For example, Jackson *et al.* (2008) suggested that the basis for misunderstanding is because entrepreneurship is viewed as being synonymous with individualism and wealth-creation rather than community activities which are based more on collective agency. Additionally, the concept of a generalised HRM model based on Western values and the practice of individualism has been challenged by the competitive management practices of Japanese organisations through the humanistic collectivistic approach (*ibid.*). Jackson (2002) argued that humanistic approach is the view that workers have values in their own right as well as part of the social world. From a phenomenological perspective, HRM humanistic approach places the inherent human nature of self-actualisation, rational human behaviour and the need to re-connect with other people through collective agency, shared beliefs and lived experiences (Husserl, 1997; Bandura, 2000; Ratner, 2000; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). For example, the African humanistic approach is based on the premise that workers are treated as human beings in their own right whose lived experiences are influenced by their broader socio-cultural relationships (Jackson, 2002; Jackson *et al.*, 2008; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). Humanistic cultural values may be pivotal to considering many of the complications of managing workers in organisations in Africa (Jackson, 2002). The challenging environments in developing nations like those of African nations are so different and unique that the Western HRM model should be tailored to fit them (Mufune, 2003). The basic differences observed between African and non-African work mannerisms are due to the priorities placed on the value systems of the communities in which the organisations are located (*ibid.*). Mufune (2003) views are captured in Nzelibe's (1986) statement: "*whereas Western management thought advocates Euro-centrism, individualism and modernity, African management thought emphasises ethnocentrism, traditionalism, communalism and cooperative teamwork*" (Nzelibe, 1986:11). Nzelibe's (1986) quote illustrates the importance and dominance of communal life in every facet of African thought systems and shared lived experiences. For instance, in Africa, dance, worship, children's upbringing, businesses and most other daily activities are communal, and even properties were held in common before the colonial era (Nzelibe, 1986; Mufune, 2003). This inherent preference for collective

agency and community in Africa suggests that individualism is viewed as an aberration (Hofstede, 1991; Mufune, 2003; Adler, 2008). The original indigenous African organisation model often reflects communal-based attributes, in that it is based on close interpersonal relationships and group interactions, and on the feelings of safety and harmony that a collective orientation provides (Mufune, 2003; Adler, 2008).

Management writers (e.g. Kamoche, 1997 & 2002 & 2011; Jackson *et al.*, 2008; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009) argued that organisations do not exist in a state of self-reliance, nor are they impervious to environmental influences. Thus, organisations are a product of the societies in which they exist, thereby bringing to focus the debate around the role of national cultural differences' on companies (*ibid.*). The importance of national cultural values applies to both an organisation's strategies and the HRM model in Africa (Kamoche, 1997; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). For example, while external stakeholders are omitted in the Western HRM model, they are considered an important feature in the socio-cultural African context when managing workers (Khan and Ackers 2004). The concept of 'stakeholding' within a Western HRM model refers mainly to the convergent internal economic organisational interest of labour and management (*ibid.*). However, in an African context, the concept of external stakeholders refers to groups such as extended family members, religious brotherhoods, village or tribal chiefs, elders and craft groups (Kamoche, 2002; Khan and Ackers 2004; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). Consequently, traditional institutions (e.g. extended family membership, brotherhood etc.) impose financial constraints on the African workers, and on the reward and motivation schemes (Kamoche, 1997).

Furthermore, African workers' lived experiences are shaped by their organisational structures and cultures which are in turn shaped by contextual cultures and value systems (Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). African's sub-cultural communities had individual indigenous traditional systems of managing work related affairs and in particular the workers' activities, before the advent of the Western HRM model (Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). The finding is backed up by a suggestion by Kamoche (2011) that an academic quest for a unique African style of management is a futile exercise, given the sheer size and cultural diversity of the continent with over two thousand ethno-linguistic groupings. From the two studies (e.g. Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Kamoche, 2011), it can be surmised from a divergence view, that a unique 'African HRM model' is a far reach which will require delineating levels of analyses. An option to developing an

‘African HRM model’ could be a sub-cultural approach as various African ethnic groupings have distinct approaches to managing people (Anakwe, 2002). However, Fajana *et al.* (2011) argued that because of the lack of indigenous and comprehensive HRM models in Africa, most African organisations have adopted the Western HRM model which is observable in workplaces. Thus, the HRM model in Africa is converging with Western-inspired approaches and at the same time, there is evidence of divergent cultural and institutional influences (Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Kamoche, 2011). That is, the HRM model in Africa suggests that there is a blend of Western-inspired and indigenous HRM practices (Fajana *et al.*, 2011). Conceptually, the HRM model in Africa is subjected to all types of social structures and cultural nuances that drive localisation as well as the integration of Western practices (Anakwe, 2002). It is imperative to look beyond the convergence/divergence debates to the effect of Western HRM initiatives on traditional practices. Therefore, the next sub-section will engage with how foreign practices integrate with indigenous HRM practices or the cross-vergence perspective on organisations in Africa.

3.4.3 A Cross-vergence Perspective

The discussions above indicate that the convergence and the divergence perspectives on their own do not fully account for the various factors that shape HRM practices as well as the workers’ lived experiences in Africa. Hence, there is also a need to engage with how HRM approaches in Africa and workers’ value systems and perceptions are integrating with Western practices, thus creating a ‘new’ workplace experience (Ralston *et al.*, 1993). That is, how the convergence and the divergence viewpoints combine or overlap to shape the HRM model in Africa. This section therefore highlights how the various indigenous African socio-cultural factors and Western HRM nuances drive integration as well as differentiation through a process of hybridization or cross-vergence (Ralston *et al.*, 1993; Anakwe, 2002). African HRM scholars (e.g. Anakwe, 2002; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Kamoche, 2011) have argued that the HRM practices in Africa are beyond the convergence versus divergence debates. Anakwe (2002) suggested that HRM practices are driven by different forces that encourage the integration of a blend of indigenous practices with Western ideologies. Furthermore, Anakwe (2002) suggested that many organisations in Nigeria and Africa operate within a dual management system which combines both Western and indigenous traditional value systems. Conceptually, Anakwe (2002) argued that cultures as well as national policies (e.g. socio-economic climate,

political structure, and level of technological advancement) frame how imported Western ideologies are implemented and practised. Gupta and Wang (2004) contended that cross-cultural encounters may not necessarily compel local organisations to take on foreign features entirely or partially, but instead they may aid in the evolution of new cultural features through the ingenious transformation of the local culture. Gupta and Wang (2004) proposed that the cross-vergence perspective implies that organisations would develop a post-rational hybrid view by creating a shared middle ground between the divergent culture and the main convergent global rationality. Jacob (2005) argued that cross-vergence is about blending the management approaches of two or more socio-cultures to form a heterogeneous culture. Jacob (2005) distinguished 'hybridisation' from cross-vergence, in that hybridisation occurs when selective parts of a management system known to be effective in one culture are transferred to the management system of a different culture. Peng (2009) suggested that a cross-vergence perspective acknowledges the validity of both convergence and divergence debates.

African HR practitioners appear to be receptive to Western HRM practices in order to improve their organisational efficiency and the workers' lived experiences (Anakwe, 2002; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). However, rather than inclining completely towards a convergent Western HRM approach, Azolukwam and Perkins (2009) suggested that social structures and cultural factors' influence on HRM practices may result in a blend of transplanted foreign concepts and indigenous workers' behaviours. Furthermore, Anakwe (2002) posited that African organisations operate within a dual organisational system with both Western and indigenous practices, with the Western practices being dominant in the organisations. The consequence is that African workers use their agency to navigate between their roles in waged employment and their responsibilities within the immediate communal environment (Ahiauzu, 1986; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). The Western management practices have been further imposed on African countries by the influence of social structures from industrialised economies, especially former colonial powers seeking to perpetuate their influence post-independence, leading to mixed management practices (Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). Similar trends of cross-vergence or mixed management styles which involve a blend of Western practices and indigenous traditions have been found elsewhere (Jacob, 2005). Jacob (2005) reported that the management styles of South Korean organisations is, for example, an amalgamation of American, Japanese and local Korean styles. In the same vein, Indian organisations were found to

have a fusion approach to management styles which is partly indigenous Indian practices and partly Western (*ibid.*). Jacob's (2005) observation coupled with African cross-vergence management styles illustrated a global pattern in which HRM practices mainly from the industrialised Western countries are being transplanted on to local management practices in emerging countries throughout the world. From the workers' workplace lived experiences, the Western HRM model, when not properly adapted to local context, leads to frustration and consequently, to a failure of return on foreign direct investment (Ahiauzu, 1986; Anakwe, 2002; Ayiteyy, 2010; Nwagbara, 2012). Furthermore, Western HRM practices have impacted negatively on African organisations, especially in their ability to compete on the global market stage (Ayiteyy, 2010; Nwagbara, 2012).

Contrary to some of the views above, Azolukwam and Perkins (2009) suggested that the cross-vergence HRM approach may satisfy the corporate governance of Western investors as well as appease the sensitivity of the local employment populace. The argument here is that in a cross-vergence management style, Western practice features will give confidence to the foreign investor while the traditional HRM approaches will resonate with the feelings, perceptions and agency of the African workers (*ibid.*). Given the increasing globalisation and presence of foreign organisations in Africa, especially the increasing presence of and the massive investments of Chinese organisations, Kamoche (2011) suggested that this approach of management will foster a 'win-win scenario' for Afro-Asian partnerships. Hence, the cross-vergence paradigm is a more suitable approach to explore the real nature of the change process in cross-cultural management practices, particularly for a transplanted/hybridised system (*ibid.*). This suggestion is evident in the study of Azolukwam and Perkins (2009), which reported that major organisations in Africa are already transformed by Western ideological concepts and implies that African local organisations' social structures and the cultural landscape is changing. However, Jacob (2005) cautioned that African and Asian over-reliance on Western-inspired business school curricula have led to the African/Asian management styles not reflecting African/Asian indigenous HRM reality. Furthermore, Jacob (2005) suggested that if necessary, the African/Asian management style can be infused with elements from other foreign practices to improve it, but in a manner that makes it acceptable locally. Otherwise, a consequential 'macdonaldisation' of the management approach and practices will be handed down which promotes the interest of Western organisations, just as the

global spread of Macdonald franchises has primarily benefited solely the Macdonald's organisations (Jacob, 2005).

The cross-vergence arguments provides insight in to the changes in the value systems by focusing on ways in which social structures, cultural and organisational impacts, precipitates the nature and magnitude of value evolution and integration (Ralston, 2008). More importantly, how the workers use their agency to nurture or challenge the evolving value integration of the foreign rules against the traditional norms through social interactions with the structures and cultures in their lifeworld (Ralston, 2008; Fendt *et al.*, 2014; Jackson *et al.*, 2014). The lifeworld of the African workers is becoming more and more an international social world as the effect of globalisation is felt on every facet of their lived experiences, and as the African workers integrate with the rest of the world based on shared experiences (Fendt *et al.*, 2014; Pudelko *et al.*, 2015). In the same way, African organisations are re-thinking and exploring new ways of integrating their traditional values and systems of management within global practices (Pudelko *et al.*, 2015). This approach looks beyond the current debate on convergence, divergence and cross-vergence where 'foreignness' and 'traditions' are viewed as liabilities and onerous that is best overcome by adaptation and adjustment (*ibid.*). Pudelko *et al.*, (2015) questioned the extent to which the distinct separation of native and foreign cultures still represents the reality of today's workforce. Consequently, there is a need to move away from the perception of 'foreignness' as a liability, to the concept where 'foreignness' is considered a global asset (Gupta and Wang, 2004; Pudelko *et al.*, 2015). African organisations need to actively use their traditional values to redefine global trends through mutual learning, innovations and knowledge exchange in order to achieve their strategic objectives (Gupta and Wang, 2004; Pudelko *et al.*, 2015). In order to address the issues identified above, this thesis will engage with the extant literature on the trans-vergence concept in the sub-section below.

3.4.4 A Trans-vergence Debate

Whilst the convergence and divergence debates represent the extreme ends of the African workers' social reality, the cross-vergence debate highlights the problems of workers living in 'two worlds' - that is, the foreign organisational structure and their socio-cultural community (Anakwe, 2002; Gupta and Wang, 2004; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Pudelko *et al.*, 2015). Hence, there is a renewed call for African organisations to rethink their HRM strategy in order to improve workers' lived experience by proactively using

the agency of workers to address global business opportunities (Pudelko *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, the key aim of this sub-section is to present the nuances that facilitates or constrains African organisations from using their local HRM practices to enhance business opportunities in the global market through a new perspective. Gupta and Wang (2004) termed this as 'trans-vergence'. Gupta and Wang (2004) described trans-vergence as a transformational process whereby as a result of globalisation effects, African organisations reinterpret and reapply their history to make it appropriate for a wider market audience. Gupta and Wang (2004) argued that this perspective is different from the classical definitions of the divergence, convergence and cross-vergence debates as it is the organisations that play a creative role. According to the trans-vergence perspective, African organisations are not reactive, but take a combined, innovative and distinct approach unique to the organisations themselves as a function of its historical antecedents and global strategy (Gupta and Wang, 2004; Pudelko *et al.*, 2015). Mackinnon (2008) summed up the trans-vergence view as a pliable, dynamic response with increased heterogeneity reacting to competitive challenges. The trans-vergence view also describes the link between the convergence of economic challenges from international trades, and the heterogeneity of appropriate strategic solutions (*ibid.*). Additionally, Gupta and Wang (2004) suggested that globalisation exerts an enormous economic pressure on African organisations to draw from global technological opportunities in order to drive forward organisational efficiency. Similarly, globalisation requires African organisations to plan and design a unique competitive advantage based on their distinctive and differentiated indigenous cultural wealth to compete successfully in the world market (*ibid.*). In summary, understanding African local cultures as well as global technological opportunities is essential and both must develop together in order to gain a sustained competitive advantage (Gupta and Wang, 2004.). Gupta and Wang (2004) pointed out that though the cross-vergence perspective shares the view of the co-evolution of cultural and technological learning, the trans-vergence perspective is different on the basis that the view is beyond a mix of pre-existing socio-cultural and technological factors.

There is limited academic work on trans-vergence, and even less on trans-vergence in Africa. More so, the problems confronting researchers are in determining how to characterise and categorise the nature of HRM in Africa (Kamoche, 2002). Also, Kamcohe (2011) argued that Africa is an integral part of evolving global society with extraordinary shifts in human resources across nations that are progressively confronted

by technological progress. Hence, there is an opportunity to contribute to the stock of knowledge on the HRM practices in Africa by engaging with the existing literature and advancing the discussions. After presenting the convergence, divergence, cross-vergence and trans-vergence debates, the next sub-section will engage with the existing debates on an 'African HRM perspective' in order to contribute to the knowledge of the HRM model in Africa.

3.4.5 Exploring a Framework for an African-Inspired HRM Model

The purpose of this sub-section is to engage with the unique and challenging African socio-cultural attributes that makes the proposal of an 'African HRM model' difficult, and to explore some of the common African values that can be incorporated in order to propose an 'African HRM model'. This is important because the perceptions of socio-cultural factors and the HRM model in Africa has been distorted by several misconceptions (Jackson, 2002; Mufune, 2003; Khan and Ackers, 2004; Ayithey, 2010). Part of the misconceptions has arisen because organisational researchers and theorists tend to group African cultures together as a single unit (Mufune, 2003; Kamoche, 2011). Another misconception that 'one African culture' is held responsible for is the underdeveloped and poor state that the continent is in, whereas a more accurate view is that Africa is multi-cultural with opposing and diverse attributes (Mufune, 2003). Nzelibe (1986) cautioned that when formulating theories for African management, it is not advisable to assume that what is successful in the Western world is applicable in the African domain as successfully. Indeed, Nzelibe (1986:6) stated that "*the result of building African theory by copying methods of other advanced countries is an assortment of pretentious structures without foundation*". Nzelibe's (1986) comment illustrates the gap between adopted foreign policies and traditional African structures built on the African workers' thought systems. As stated earlier, the consequence is that of the African workers' perceptions and feelings of frustration of their workplace lived experience (Khan and Ackers, 2004). Nzelibe (1986) and Ayithey (2010) maintained that in the pre-colonial era, ancient African empires (e.g. Ghana, Mali, Songhai and Oyo) instituted complex socio-economic structures and large military forces which developed management models similar to modern day concepts. Ayithey (2010) argued that African social structures and cultures were covered in myths during the colonial era because the European colonialists were not able to discern between the presence of a social structure and different forms of the same social structure. For example, the pre-colonial African era had systems in place

for managing workers, but not a HRM model (*ibid.*). Just as the concept of money is not new to Africa, Africans used ‘cowries’ as currency before the arrival of Europeans on the continent whereas the concept of paper money is new to Africans (*ibid.*). Hence, it would be wrong to argue that the European colonialists introduced money or people management systems to Africa; it was just the form that it existed in that differed (*ibid.*). Thus, the myths surrounding pre-colonial institutions in Africa needs to be discussed for two important reasons (*ibid.*). The first reason is that workers may falsely believe that the corrupt and repressive governments forced on millions of Africans by contemporary leaders are part and parcel of the traditional norms and culture (*ibid.*). The second reason is that some African elites and writers espouse and still believe these myths, thinking that concepts such as democracy, accountability, and transparency and general people management are foreign to African culture (Ayittey, 2010). Comparable to the European colonialists’ misconceptions of African management structures, the contemporary African leaders also exhibit cultural ignorance and this is captured in the words of Ayittey (2010:1184): “*The continent is littered with the putrid carcasses of failed imported systems and explains why many African countries are in crisis*”. The view illustrated in Ayittey’s (2010) quote was earlier echoed by African management writers (e.g. Abudu, 1986; Jackson, 2002; Khan and Ackers, 2004) who suggested that what is usually referred to as national cultures in Africa is neither native nor foreign, but ‘*hybrid monstrosities*’ that are the fallout of European colonialism and impractical post-independent strategies. The gap in the African literature concerning what constitutes an indigenous HRM practice has contributed to the misunderstanding of indigenous African management theories and practices by Western writers (Jackson, 2002). Khan and Ackers (2004) argued that although there is a salient multiplicity in the sub-Saharan African traditional norms, here are significant cultural provisions and value systems that are prevalent enough to allow for a cautious generalisation of an ‘African social system’. Kamoche (2011) highlighted the interconnectedness of African society and argued that the concept of ‘*ubuntu*’ can be a starting point for developing an Afrocentric managerial approach. Additionally, from an African coaching perspective using leadership myths and stories, Okonkwo (2010) argued that ‘*oriki*’ or a personal praise song is a unique African concept which can potentially contribute to coaching and leadership development across cultures. This line of argument is supported by Azolukwam and Perkins’ (2009) sub-cultural approach to understand indigenous HRM practices in Africa. Similarly, Jacob (2005) contended that cross-cultural views about a nation are enriched by sub-cultural studies within those nations.

For example, in African's multi-cultural societies, a particular management practice may not always be acceptable to the other sub-cultures within the same nation (*ibid.*).

Furthermore, the functional value of HRM as a strategic tool is more challenging in Africa due to a combination of different structural factors such as an unpredictable political environment; a lack of strategic management skills; institutional weaknesses, poor infrastructural support, and environmental uncertainties (Kamoche, 1997 & 2002; Jackson, 2002; Jackson *et al.*, 2014). More importantly, beyond the perception of a rich, diverse and enduring African cultural setting lies the reality of a troubled and unstable political milieu which is militating against economic prosperity and the growth of businesses on the continent (Kamoche, 2011). Also, the economy tends to be inconspicuous until objections from workers make the news, hence the need to factor in the economic reality of the African terrain when considering any management theories for the continent (Kamoche, 2011). In general, most African managers constantly try to find a strategic fit between the economic challenges and unstable socio-political environment, sometimes using information technology to improve the workers' perception of their lived experiences and organisational efficiency (Iyang, 2008; Adeleye, 2011; Kamoche, 2011). Notwithstanding the importance of recent information and communication technology on the HRM model in Africa, a number of challenges still face African governments in ensuring that a HRM model is effectively applied (Urien, 2011). Some challenges are as a result of the social, economic and political situations of individual countries (*ibid.*). For example, some West African governments have not been able to meet the challenge of providing a regular electricity supply, which poses a serious threat to information technology and communication tools and as a consequence, the effectiveness of a HRM model in the countries (*ibid.*). Whilst it can be argued that modern information technology and communication systems has improved both the workers' perception of their workplace lived experience and lifeworld in general, the challenge of balancing both their workplace requirements and private lives still remains overwhelming on the workers' perceptions, thoughts, opinions and feelings (Eze, 2006; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Fajana *et al.*, 2011). The consequence of the conflict between the workers' workplace and private lives is that workers' collective agency is ineffective, and the HRM policy in place is not adhered to by the workers (Khan and Ackers, 2004; Eze, 2006).

Having discussed the key international debates (convergence versus divergence) under the HRM model in Africa to set the scene, it is now imperative to engage with extant

literature on the HRM model in Nigeria. It is important because Africa is not a monolithic culture and neither is Africa homogeneous in its social structures, cultures and history. Thus, it is critical to provide a more focussed HRM approach within the socio-cultural context of this thesis. By doing this, the reader can better appreciate the various structures and cultural factors shaping the Nigerian worker's agency and perceptions of their lived experiences. To do this, the next section will discuss in detail the HRM model in Nigeria.

3.5 Overview of the HRM Model in Nigeria's Socio-Cultural Context

The aim of this section is to present the HRM model within the Nigerian social structures within an economic, social, political and legal environment, and its consequential effect on the workers' workplace lived experience. Therefore, there is a need for substantial historical and cultural knowledge of the indigenous Nigerian environment in order to appreciate the processes, philosophies and challenges of a HRM model in the country (Fajana, *et al.*, 2011). On that note, an important historical event in the Nigerian workers' workplace lived experience was the economic reform instituted by the democratic government of Nigeria in 1999, which marked the move away from a mixed economy system towards a market-oriented approach (Okpara and Wynn, 2008; Oshikoya, 2008; Fajana, *et al.*, 2011; Owoyemi *et al.*, 2011). The economic reform involved the privatization of public sector companies which brought about the debate of a HRM model in the country to the fore-front as the role of a HRM model was critical in the privatization processes (Okpara and Wynn, 2008). In the last two decades, there has been a growing awareness of a HRM model in Nigeria due to the enactment of the Civil Service Reforms (Inyang, 2008). The decree promoted the importance of a HRM function and also created a separate directorate of personnel to manage this responsibility (*ibid.*). Anyim *et al.* (2011) argued that the Nigerian government endorsed most of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions with the aim of strengthening its diplomatic relations and improving corporate identity as well as striving for a consistent way of managing the workers' agency and workplace lived experience. To be effective locally, Anyim *et al.* (2011) suggested that the conventions need to be adapted to the Nigerian cultural setting. Notably, very few studies (e.g. Okpara and Wynn, 2008; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009) have demonstrated the effectiveness of HRM outside Western countries, and in Nigeria in particular. With the globalisation of the world economy, there is an increasing requirement to investigate the efficacy and generalisation of the HRM model in non-Western contexts (Okpara and Wynn, 2008; Peng, 2009).

Nigeria has opened its borders to international businesses and with the country's economy growing quickly, it is imperative for researchers and practitioners to understand management practices and workers' workplace lived experiences under a HRM model in the country (Anakwe, 2002; Okpara and Wynn, 2008; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). Okpara and Wynn (2008) emphasised that from a practical perspective, managements' attention should be focused on the fact that there is a necessity to develop HRM models that can improve the effectiveness and sustainability of companies in Nigeria as well as improving workers' productivity and workplace lived experience (*ibid.*).

From a historical perspective, British colonialist's aim was to create a Nigerian working class that was detached from the local traditional provisions and communal relationships within the immediate society (Anakwe, 2002; Khan and Ackers, 2004; Ayittey, 2010; Fajana, *et al.*, 2011). Post-independence, Nigerian leaders continued with the colonial management practices leading to the current wave of employment management problems in the country (Jackson, 2002; Khan and Ackers, 2004; Emeti, 2012). Moreover, the introduction of waged employment threatened the existing traditional structures such as: age groups, craft groups, and the local chiefs and elders' forum (Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). This has led to the local traditional rulers encouraging the local workers to come to them to settle disputes outside of the HRM policy provisions (*ibid.*). Thus, the lingering employment problems in the country (discussed in section 1.4.1) should be tackled from a sociological perspective rather than a purely economic response (Khan and Ackers, 2004). In the same way, there is a knowledge gap in our understanding of HRM policies and their implementation in many developing African countries, and in particular, Nigeria (Anakwe, 2002). Anakwe (2002) emphasised that there is need to have up-to-date information on HRM practices which will build on the previous studies, especially as it affects workers' agency and workplace lived experience within their organisational structures. Hence, rather than relying on cultural generalisations for Nigeria, researchers should be focusing on any ethnic factors (Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). The arguments above brings into perspective the observation by Okpara and Wynn (2008) that generalised Western HRM practices bring into clearer focus the unsuitability of imported cultures with indigenous Nigerian cultures, structures and value systems. It can be argued that there is a justifiable homogeneity in the essence of the 'African thought systems' as suggested by Khan and Ackers (2004). However, Khan and Ackers (2004) cautioned that any debate on modelling a 'Nigerian HRM framework' must improve the ability of the

organisations to go beyond incorporating elements of African thought systems. Such a HRM model should institutionalise the compatible components of the African socio-cultural systems into official policies and procedures to improve the Nigerian workers' workplace lived experiences and to enhance the workers' agency to support organisational efficiency (*ibid.*). For example, Nigeria's cultural norms dictate that extended family members and close friends with employment difficulties depend on the Nigerian worker's income (Probst and Ekore, 2010).

In general, management practices exported to Nigeria are influenced by economic theorems and Western-inspired organisational psychology with positivist paradigms for fact finding, theory generalisation and universalistic concepts (Kamoche, 1997; Anakwe, 2002; Probst and Ekore, 2010). Hence, in order to comprehend the African thought system and its effects on workers' agency and lived experiences, it is essential to understand how Nigerian workers decipher the world around them through a combination of symbolism and mystical thinking. By inference, it can be adjudged that the significance of any Western management theory on HRM policies and practices in Nigeria will depend on how such concepts can offer insights into the many ways by which effective organisations can be built and nurtured, and workers' agency enhanced. By the same token, changes in the Nigerian cultural and structural environment brings with it resultant losses in the effectiveness, transferability and appeal for organisational HRM policies (Hostede, 1991; Gbadamosi, 2005). Thus, HRM practices are culture-bound and indigenous beliefs and values are embedded subconsciously in Nigerian society (Gbadamosi, 2005). However, indigenous beliefs and values are often deemed as backward in academic literature, yet many Nigerian workers continue to draw from these traditions and indigenous practitioners for their spiritual, medical, work-related and communal support (*ibid.*). Beliefs in magic, witchcraft, clairvoyance, palm reading, and all sorts of mystical thinking is still prevalent among Nigerian workers and thus, superstition remains a part of the ordinary life of a Nigerian (Abudu, 1986; Nzelibe, 1986; Ahiauzu, 1989; Adigun, 1995; Gbadamosi, 2005). Hence, the thought process of Nigerian workers could be argued to be pre-consciously predisposed to magical or spiritual causality which influences the agency and the workers' perceptions of their lived experience (Abudu, 1986; Nzelibe, 1986; Gbadamosi, 2005). It is simplistic to assume that Nigerian traditional magico-religious behaviour is widespread in organisations today, and that traditional tribal communities throughout history have endeavoured to lessen

fears raised by the challenging and unknown events in the lifeworld through this behaviour (Gbadamosi, 2005). The use of rites, rituals, symbols, charms, taboos, and the various forms of magic and mystical constructs are all engrained into the subconscious of people through socialisation in attempts to both understand the world and to moderate it (Kamoche, 2002; Gbadamosi, 2005). The magical constructs are manifested today in the thought processes and agency of Nigerian workers underpinning their perceptions of their lived experiences, and in the management of organisational rites and symbols (Gbadamosi, 2005; Probst and Ekore, 2010).

Furthermore, in order to fully understand how the Nigerian workers' agency and thought processes influences the HRM model in Nigeria, it is important to consider the workers' workplace and lifeworld lived experiences (Khan and Ackers, 2004; Kamoche, 2011). For example, the socio-cultural arrangements in the Nigerian context is such that everything is designed to be community-based where people are socialised into different communal activities (Khan and Ackers, 2004; Eze, 2006; Omadjohwoefe, 2011; Emeti, 2012). The workers' perception of frustration stems from the fact that the HRM model does not have provisions for the traditional community-based socio-cultural arrangements and more so, the roles of gender in society (Kamoche, 2002; Khan and Ackers, 2004; Emeti, 2012). Due to the importance of the effect that the workers' agency, their workplace and their lifeworld lived experiences has on the effectiveness of the HRM model, it is imperative to engage with literature on these issues. Hence, the next sub-section will present the discussions on the Nigerian workers' workplace and lifeworld lived experience and how the expected roles of gender shape the workers' agency.

3.5.1 Exploring the Role of Gender, Nigerian Workers' Workplace and Lifeworld Lived Experiences Under the HRM Model

The aim of this sub-section is to discuss the factors that influence the effectiveness of the HRM model in Nigeria by illustrating how the Nigerian workers' workplace and lifeworld lived experiences shapes their agency. Thus, it can be argued that the Western HRM model in Nigeria does not go far enough to address some of the salient lifeworld socio-cultural factors, such as the role of external stakeholders; the community-based approach to management; and the role of gender in the society (Jones *et al.*, 2000; Kamoche, 2002; Emeti, 2012). The growing most important factor for Nigerian workers irrespective of their gender regarding having a successful career is balancing their workplace and lifeworld lived experiences ahead of money, recognition, and autonomy (Fapohunda,

2014a). Changes in family structure from an extended family (including cousins and other distant relatives) to a nuclear family unit (a couple and their children) have increased the workers' propensity towards flexible working patterns (*ibid.*). Nigerian societies are evolving such that some families no longer depend on men's incomes alone (*ibid.*). Hence, it is not uncommon to find both men and women working and contributing to the family income (Odle-dusseau *et al.*, 2012; Fapohunda, 2014b). Nigerian women in the past worked in socio-culturally acceptable types of employment such as nursing, teaching, catering and secretarial jobs which were seen as an extension of their traditional and domestic duties (Adenugba and Ilupeju, 2012; Fapohunda, 2014a). However, women now increasingly work in better waged professions such as banking, journalism, politics and engineering (Adenugba and Ilupeju, 2012). New career opportunities bring with it cultural and social changes that increase the workplace and lifeworld lived experience challenges that shape the workers' agency (Odle-dusseau, *et al.*, 2012).

Balancing workplace and personal lifeworld lived experiences is an important aspect of the HRM model in Nigeria because it affects the workers' agency which invariably also affects workers' productivity at work (Adisa *et al.*, 2014). More so, because the two domains of work and personal life overlap and are mutually dependent with one influencing the other in a way that agency, feelings, attitudes and behaviours from one domain is transferred to the other (Odle-dusseau *et al.*, 2012; Adisa *et al.*, 2014). Adisa *et al.* (2014) posited that practising workplace and personal lifeworld lived experiences balance is not common in Nigeria with only maternity, annual and casual leave being the only recognised leave arrangements. Most other types (e.g. part-time work, parental leave, casual leave, on-site child care, emergency childcare, backup adult and elder care, school holiday cover, on-site work-life balance expert, nanny share, reduced working hours, compressed working hours, annualised hours, teleworking, career breaks, term-time working, flexitime scheme, working from home, cultural/religious leave, and staggered working hours) are either not provisioned for in HRM policies or not in operation amongst the workers (Adisa *et al.*, 2014; Fapohunda, 2014a). Fapohunda (2014a) suggested that one of the factors that necessitated the need for flexible work time plans and individualised schedules is the increased involvement of women in waged employment. Nonetheless, the extent and options of flexibility sought by the workers does not always align with that of the employers, and this sometimes has implications for workers' lived experiences along gender parity (*ibid.*).

The number of women entering into waged employment is increasing in Nigeria, and there has been a corresponding increase in workplace lived experience problems that women face, prompting researchers to explore the role of gender in management (Jones *et al.*, 2000). Omadjohwoefe (2011) asserted that the biological differences between men and women are essential, but that the differences in masculinity and femininity are socio-culturally constructed and are grounded in meaning, belief and practice. Gender role differentiation is a common factor amongst all tribal groups in Africa (*ibid.*). African gender ideology provides the framework for framing different lives for men and women by putting them into different social positions and patterns of expectation (Hussein, 2005). Consequently, the differentiation in gender roles leads to men and women assuming an uneven social status in terms of power, prestige and wealth (Omadjohwoefe, 2011). The increased presence of women in waged employment has therefore profoundly impacted social institutions, particularly the family (Fapohunda, 2014a). For instance, it is very difficult for a woman who works 40 hours a week in waged employment to work a further 40 to 50 hours at home (*ibid.*). There is an increase in the time spent on household chores by men, but women still undertake most of the household responsibilities, including child care (*ibid.*). Irrespective of the demanding nature of a woman's professional career, women still play the role of the home-maker (Olayanju, 2005). However, in families where both men and women work, the sharing of domestic chores is mediated by several factors, such as the income contribution of each partner, the social class, ethnicity, the number and ages of any children, and the couples' perceptions of the role of gender (*ibid.*).

The label of 'men's only' jobs in Nigeria is changing, and more women now hold leadership positions in organisations than ever before (Okpara, 2006). Nonetheless, there are still serious concerns about the role of Nigerian women in the national and economic development of the country (*ibid.*). Okpara (2006) maintained that cultural and religious discrimination against women persists and more so, that women are discriminated against in terms of their right of entrance to education for social and economic reasons. According to Nigerian management writers (e.g. Hussein, 2005; Okpara, 2006; Omadjohwoefe, 2011; Adenuga and Ilupeju, 2012), gender role differentiation is a very evident phenomenon in Nigerian social structure as it is widespread in social institutions. In a patriarchal culture like Nigeria, women are saddled with role overload leading to situations where family obligations come into serious conflict with work demands

(Akanji, 2013). Thus, a combination of workplace and personal life lived experience challenges affect women's agency (Adigun, 1995; Eze, 2006; Fajana *et al.*, 2011; Emeti, 2012; Akanji, 2013; Muogbo, 2013). Furthermore, women in Nigeria traditionally raise children under their direct supervision or under the supervision of an immediate extended family member, but economic pressure now forces women to work in waged employment in order to provide financial support to the family (Akanji, 2013; Fapohunda, 2014b). This has therefore led to young children being taken care of outside of the family group, with the duties transferred to the larger society through provisions, such as crèches, day-care centres, nannies, child-minders and babysitters (Eze, 2006; Omadjohwoefe, 2011; Emeti, 2012; Akanji, 2013).

Adenuga and Ilupeju (2012) argued that globalisation has brought with it increasing competition among Nigerian organisations, and many of these organisations have devised techniques and strategies to improve their businesses, one of which includes the employment of unmarried women graduates. For example, Adenuga and Ilupeju (2012) reported that most banks in Nigeria employ young women as sales agents to attract prospective customers to the banks. As university or polytechnic graduates, women sales agents are expected to use their agency either by using their 'beauty' or through sexual interaction to convince prospective customers who are most often wealthy men (*ibid.*). Adenuga and Ilupeju (2012) raised an ethical question around the role of some Nigerian banks' HRM practices in encouraging women workers to compromise their dignity for the purpose of bringing investment to the banks. Some Nigerian banks give priority to the employment of women for roles such as sales agent (marketers) and front desk officers (Adenuga and Ilupeju, 2012; Fapohunda, 2014b). Adenuga and Ilupeju (2012) reiterated that even though the employment of women sales agents (marketers) are not documented in the banks' HRM policies, it can be inferred from the recruitment practices and patterns of these organisations. Furthermore, the poor economic situation in Nigeria has limited the prospect of getting good jobs, and as a result, hampered the bargaining power of the workers (Akanji, 2013; Fapohunda, 2014b). The resulting effect of low bargaining power of workers, coupled with the organisations' insufficient understanding of the magnitude of workplace-lifeworld lived experience balance on workers' agency, has largely contributed to a lack of thoughtfulness by managers for the workers' welfare (Fapohunda, 2014b). Furthermore, the view among some Nigerian organisations is that giving workers an improved workplace and lifeworld lived experience is expensive (Akanji, 2013;

Fapohunda, 2014b). Hence, the workers work under challenging conditions (Fapohunda, 2014b).

In summary, the existing management studies (e.g. Adigun, 1995; Eze, 2006; Fajana *et al.*, 2011; Fapohunda, 2014b) have identified and illustrated the importance of ensuring a balance between workplace demands and lifeworld lived experience under a HRM model and how it is linked to the broader issue of gender in relation to work arrangements in Nigeria. Values are the key drivers of human agency, making them essential constructs in the study of balancing workplace demands and lifeworld lived experience, gender and HRM practices (Fapohunda, 2014b; Hoorn, 2015). Values influence workers' agency and hence, sheds light on the features of organisational behaviour as an outgrowth of national culture (Hoorn, 2015). In turn, the workers' collective agency and lived experiences shapes the HRM model in Nigeria (Adigun, 1995; Eze, 2006; Fajana *et al.*, 2011).

3.6 Discussions and Summary

The aim of this chapter was to engage with the existing literature on HRM, IHRM, cross-cultural management and SHRM in order to understand how the workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experiences influences their agency within the context of the social structures and cultural factors confronting them. The aim was achieved by engaging with the existing debates on convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence arguments within an IHRM framework and cross-cultural studies. The debates were advanced by situating them within an African context in order to provide a more contextual focus. Thereafter, the HRM practices were discussed within Nigeria's historical and cultural context in relation to workers' agency and workplace lived experiences. It was observed at this point that it is imperative to critique the key studies on Nigerian workers' workplace and personal lifeworld's lived experiences due to the sometimes conflicting workplace experiences and personal lifeworld of the workers which has an effect on HRM practices. The conflicting workplace and personal lifeworld lived experiences has implications for the workers' agency, particularly along the gender line, with more women being disadvantaged due to the role that women are socialised to play in the wider Nigerian socio-cultural context.

However, the above key IHRM debates do not adequately explain how organisational strategies influence workers' workplace lived experiences (Gibson and Hanes, 2003; Olufemi, 2009; Ransome, 2010). For instance, the strategies adopted by organisations to

achieve objectives and to gain a competitive advantage also influences the workers' agency and their workplace lived experience (Adenugba and Ilupeju, 2012; Odle-dusseau *et al.*, 2012). Thus, to address this gap, it is important to link and integrate HRM policies and practices with organisational strategies using an existing SHRM framework (Iyang, 2008; Muogbo, 2013; Mammana and Somantri, 2014). This is imperative because the existing convergent/divergent/cross-vergence/trans-vergence debates overly focuses on the role of socio-cultural factors and Western management practices as the main determinants of worker agency and workplace lived experience (Kerr *et al.*, 1962; Laurent, 1983; Mufune, 2003; Kwar, 2012). Therefore, further discussions are required to understand how organisational strategies influence the workers' agency and their workplace lived experience. To achieve this, Chapter Four will present the key debates on Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) approaches and provide discussions on how SHRM links to current IHRM debates and the phenomenological framework, in order to demonstrate how the workers' agency and their workplace lived experiences are shaped by organisational strategies. Thus, by linking SHRM to key debates in IHRM, Chapter Four will close the gap in our knowledge of the nature of the HRM model in Africa. Hence, this thesis will contribute to the stock of knowledge on the HRM model in Africa by advancing the current HRM debates using the workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experience.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MODEL IN AFRICAN CONTEXT: WORKERS' AGENCY AND WORKPLACE LIVED EXPERIENCES

4.1 Introduction

The aim of Chapter Four is to use the existing studies to discuss how workers' agency and their workplace lived experiences are shaped by organisational strategies using the SHRM model in Africa. Moreover, Chapter Four engages with existing literature on debates on how workers' agency and contextual factors shapes organisational strategies which in turn influences the HRM model in Africa. Thus, the discussions in Chapter Four will ensure that the guiding theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter Two and the key debates around IHRM and cross-cultural studies discussed in Chapter Three are brought into the organisational context. For example, in Chapter Two, it was established that the structure dimension includes workplace factors such as the HRM model and organisational strategies while the agency dimension involves the capacity of the Nigerian workers to act or intervene in their workplace and personal lifeworld (Anakwe, 2002; Oshikoya, 2008). Furthermore, Chapter Three advanced the discussions in Chapter Two by discussing how workers' agency shapes the HRM model, and how in turn the HRM model influences the workers' lived experience (Anakwe, 2002; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). Chapter Four, therefore brings the discussions in the previous literature review chapters to a conclusion by discussing how workers' agency and socio-cultural lifeworld shapes the organisational strategies. Chapter Four will discuss how the organisational strategies are aligned to the HRM model through an existing SHRM framework which is shaped by collective worker agency and intersubjectivity. Thereby closing the gaps in our understanding of the different factors that shape the Nigerian workers' workplace lived experience.

To achieve the aim of this chapter, Chapter Four is structured into linked sections which will start with an overview of the SHRM model, thereby setting the scene for the following discussions in the chapter. Section 4.3 engages with the organisational rationale for aligning organisational strategies to the HRM model and contextual factors through workers' agency. Hence, there is a need to discuss how the SHRM model is linked to convergence, divergence, cross-vergence and trans-vergence debates in Section 4.4. Also, aligning organisational strategies to the HRM model and contextual factors implies two SHRM models - best practice and best fit. Understanding how the two schools of thought (best practice and best fit) shape worker agency provides a richer and deeper insight into

the social structures and cultural factors that influence the workers' lived experiences within African organisations (Anakwe, 2002; Abdulkadir, 2012; Adegoroye and Oladejo, 2012; Muogbo, 2013). Thus, to achieve this aim, Section 4.5 engages with the existing literature on the impact of an SHRM model on workers' agency. Thereafter, sections 4.6 and 4.7 discuss the best practice and the best fit models within an African context respectively.

Finally, Chapter Four will discuss how SHRM is aligned to phenomenological frameworks in order to demonstrate that the result of social interactions between worker agency and structure is the social construct of SHRM which consequently shapes the workers' lived experience (Wright and McMahan, 1992). Having discussed the structure of Chapter Four, the chapter will start with an overview of an SHRM model in the next section.

4.2 An Overview of the Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) Model

The debates covered in Chapter Three focused mainly on the socio-cultural lifeworld background of the HRM model and therefore, there is a need to make links between the socio-cultural background of the HRM model and organisational strategies. This is important because in today's global business environment, organisations should use all possible resources to achieve a competitive advantage, and human resources are one of these resources (Kiessling and Harvey, 2005; Hoorn, 2015). It is also important because the processes by which organisations utilise their human resources to achieve their strategic objectives and the socio-cultural context combine to shape their workers' workplace lived experiences (Fitzgerald and Howe-Walsh, 2008). Extant studies (e.g. Kiessling and Harvey, 2005; Anyim *et al.*, 2011; Chung *et al.*, 2012; Hite, 2015) strongly suggest that human resources are crucial factors that support organisations in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. Thus, the SHRM model is based on the integration of HRM principles with organisational strategies (CIDP, 2012; Mammana and Somantri, 2014; Hite, 2015). Van Buren III *et al.* (2011) contended that HRM theories and practices have been moving towards supporting organisational strategies, thereby transforming HRM into SHRM. Jackson *et al.* (2014) argued that the term "strategic HRM" broadly suggests an effective HRM model that contributes to an organisations' effectiveness when HR professionals support the line managers with business decisions. Therefore, the SHRM model as a management tool can be used for shaping a number of outcomes of concern to the workers' workplace lived experience and to external society (*ibid.*).

The SHRM model has different meanings and applications across various socio-cultural contexts, however new understandings about managing workers' agency and lived experience can be gained through research which, if appropriately considered and linked to the broader context, yields beneficial outcomes (Anyim *et al.*, 2011; Van Buren III *et al.*, 2011; Ajila *et al.*, 2012; Jackson *et al.*, 2014). The interdependence that exemplifies the features of the SHRM structure extends to worker agency which enacts the organisations' structures through their everyday work and intersubjectivity (Jackson *et al.*, 2014). The SHRM structures come alive in intersubjective interactions within organisations, including workers who take part in formulating, communicating, and reacting to features of the SHRM system (*ibid.*). Moreover, formal SHRM policies are more frequently subjected to interpretation by individual managers as they endeavour to react to specific and swiftly changing working contexts while the workers negotiate their individual lived experiences within employment contracts and working conditions (Osland and Osland, 2005; Chung *et al.*, 2012; Jackson *et al.*, 2014; Hite, 2015).

An organisations' intersubjective socio-cultural internal and external environment is constantly changing, thus creating a dynamic, but intertwined structural and agentic context for formulating, developing, advancing, and recreating SHRM policies and practices (Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Chung *et al.*, 2012; Ariss, 2014; Jackson *et al.*, 2014). The SHRM model is intrinsically contextualised and dynamic because intersubjective interdependencies bind the HRM structures to the external socio-cultural society in which they are engrained (Jackson *et al.*, 2014). By the same token, the SHRM structures cannot be completely comprehended without making an allowance for their interrelationships with other cultural and agentic components of an organisation to which it is inextricably bound (Chung *et al.*, 2012; Ariss, 2014). With organisations facing a rapidly changing environment characterised by intense competition, globalisation and unpredictability, there is a need for organisational strategies and decisions to reflect an understanding of the interdependencies between the organisation, its human resources and the socio-cultural external environment (Jackson *et al.*, 2014). It has also been argued that the choice of SHRM approach should take into consideration the political component of the external environment (Osland and Osland, 2005). Since the SHRM model constitutes many diverse influences (e.g. predominant cultural norms and structural socio-political societal discourses), certain organisational initiatives tend to seem natural and sensible because of their affinities with prevalent values and ideologies embedded in the workers'

perceptions of their lived experiences and view of the lifeworld (Salaman *et al.*, 2005; Osland and Osland, 2005; Thompson, 2011). Therefore, the role of the SHRM model is to identify, evaluate and assess these diverse influences and their impact on worker agency and the organisations' strategies (Salaman *et al.*, 2005).

The workers role in formulating and implementing an SHRM model is important because they are informed agents negotiating choices, constraints and opportunities rather than, passive recipients of any cultural norms (Thompson, 2011). The understanding and approaches of the SHRM model draws attention to the nature, origin and influence of the thoughts underpinning SHRM initiatives (Salaman *et al.*, 2005). In particular, the thoughts underpinning SHRM initiatives affects how organisations are managed, workers' workplace lived experience and the work arrangements in general (*ibid.*). In summary, Salaman *et al.* (2005) argued that a SHRM model can best be understood in relation to the wider structural contexts of politics and socio-economic factors; in relation to major shifts in thoughts and their underlying cultural undertones; and to the perceptions of the daily lived experiences of managers and workers as they seek to achieve the organisations' strategic objectives. Hence, it is important to engage further in the next section with a rationale for why organisations adopt the SHRM model to align worker agency to the organisations' objectives.

4.3 Organisational Rationale for a SHRM Model

The aim of this section is to discuss the rationale for organisations adopting an SHRM model. Chapter Three highlighted through the existing research the fact that the role of socio-cultural factors as well as the imposition of Western practices on the HRM model in Africa has influenced the lived experiences of workers. However, organisations have economic and other specific objectives which are driven by organisational strategies; these strategies influence HRM policies and practices which in turn, affect the workers' agency and workplace lived experiences (Emeti, 2012; Muogbo, 2013). Existing studies in SHRM practices (e.g. Oladipo and Abdulkadir, 2011; Abdulkadir, 2012; Muogbo, 2013) suggested that the SHRM model is used to shape the agency of workers and managers. Under an SHRM model, managers are involved in HRM activities in areas such as training, staff appraisal, motivation, compensation (Anyim *et al.*, 2011; Adegoroye and Oladejo, 2012). Essentially the SHRM approach is about the managers taking the lead role in supporting and motivating workers in order to achieve organisational objectives (Oladipo and Abdulkadir, 2011). Oladipo and Abdulkadir

(2011) cautioned that managers may know everything about managing workers and applying HRM strategies, but not practice it; and managers may know the benefit of their subordinates' participation, but do not apply it. It is therefore down to the managers' individual commitment to ensure that the SHRM model achieves the key organisational objectives (*ibid.*). Hence, to achieve a workplace lived experience, where the workers are motivated and adequately supported, it is argued that organisations need to integrate their HRM model with overall organisational strategies and operations, using a SHRM framework (Oladipo and Abdulkadir, 2011). Therefore, linking HRM strategy to organisational strategies is likely to create the right organisational climate for both managers and workers (Abdulkadir, 2012). According to Abdulkadir (2012), organisational climate is a significant part of the meaning that the workers attach to their work environment, with this cognitive interpretation shaping the agency and perception of workplace lived experiences. Consequently, the workers' workplace lived experience and the impact that the workplace environment has on agency influences work behaviours and job-related attitudes (*ibid.*). It can also be inferred from the existing studies (e.g. Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Emeti, 2012; Muogbo, 2013; Ariss, 2014; Jackson *et al.*, 2014) that a SHRM model offers a valid framework for studying how HRM practices are linked to organisational strategies within social structures and cultural contexts, which influence worker agency and their workplace lived experiences.

It has been said that strategic management significantly impacts HRM policies and practices, leading to the formulation of a SHRM model (Kamoche, 2002; Cristiania and Peiro, 2015). Under the SHRM model, workers are said to be partners in that they have a stake in the organisation that requires their full collaboration so that the organisational objectives, team objectives as well as the individual objectives are realised (Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2009). SHRM policies and practices have been identified as the key drivers of organisational effectiveness and the improved management of the agency of workers (Emeti, 2012). Management writers (e.g. Inyang, 2008; Becker and Huselid, 2010) posited that the main difference between traditional HRM and the SHRM model is the shift of the individual workers' efficiency to the entire organisation. Worker efficiency can be achieved by adopting a HRM model at all levels of the organisation (Emeti, 2012). Therefore, a key benefit of the SHRM model is its focus in creating an alignment between the organisation's HRM policies, practices and plan, with the organisations overall strategies (Inyang, 2008). By integrating the HRM model and organisational strategies, a

SHRM model will contribute to the effective and efficient management of workers' agency, which in turn will affect their lived experience while achieving the organisational objectives (Becker and Huselid, 2010). The assumption is that the workers' collective agency has a major effect on both individual and organisational performance; that the workers' agency and workplace lived experiences are intersubjective and interdependent; and that the effective management of the workers' agency and experience through effective HRM practices leads to effective strategic management (Bandura, 2000; Smith, 2004; Becker and Huselid, 2010; Berggren, 2014; Fendt *et al.*, 2014; Gill, 2014). Hence, workers' collective agency and shared lived experiences as a contribution towards organisations' competitive advantage is likely to be better valued through a SHRM model which places the workers as a strategic business partner within an organisation (Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2009; Becker and Huselid, 2010; Emeti, 2012; Muogbo, 2013).

The rationale provided in the above discussions has highlighted the contributions of the SHRM model to organisational success through the integration of organisational strategies with the use of HRM strategy. More importantly, a SHRM model ensures that the worker agency and workplace lived experiences are better aligned to organisational needs and expectations (Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2009; Becker and Huselid, 2010). Having discussed the rationale for adopting a SHRM model to illustrate the various factors influencing workers' lived experiences, this thesis will now discuss the links between the SHRM and the IHRM debates of convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence concepts. It was identified in Section 3.5 in Chapter Three that the existing convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence debates do not adequately explain how HRM strategies are aligned to organisational strategies (Mufune, 2003; Adler, 2008; Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Kwar, 2012). Rather, the central focus of the IHRM debate is on the role of social structures, contextual cultural factors and Western management practices as the determinants of worker agency and workplace lived experience (Kerr *et al.*, 1962; Laurent, 1983; Hofstede, 1991; Whitley, 2000; Hickson and Pugh, 2001; Mufune, 2003; Adler, 2008; Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Kwar, 2012). A likely potential key contributing factor to the gap between the HRM and SHRM models relate to how a HRM model and strategic management has evolved independently of one another, even though the application of both influences worker agency and workplace lived experiences (Mintzberg, 1978; Iyang, 2008; Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2009; Becker and Huselid, 2010). This gap offers an opportunity to engage with the extant literature on both the SHRM and

IHRM debates to identify any common areas of convergence. To do this, the next section discusses the details of how the SHRM model links into IHRM debates.

4.4 Linking the SHRM Model to Convergence/Divergence/Cross-vergence/Trans-vergence HRM Debates

The distinction between HRM and SHRM models has been discussed and established in Section 1.2. Thus, the purpose of this section is to explore how the SHRM model links to the existing convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence IHRM debates. It is important to do this because the focus of this study is to explore and understand the various factors that influence the workers' agency and workplace lived experiences in organisations, and both SHRM and IHRM debates offer valid frameworks for this. Consequently, there is a need to link the convergence, divergence, cross-vergence, trans-vergence IHRM debates to the organisations' strategies using a SHRM framework. According to Anakwe (2002), in emerging economies, convergence-divergence HRM debate is promoted by consulting firms, multi-national organisations, business schools and foreign investors who are looking for ways to address environmental uncertainties whilst transferring foreign HRM policies and practices to their host country. Moreover, HRM writers (e.g. Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2009; Becker and Huselid, 2010; Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Kamoche, 2011) argued that there is a limited link between convergence-divergence HRM debates and organisational strategies. This gap presents an opportunity to discuss how contextual issues can be linked to organisational objectives using a SHRM model and worker agency through their perceptions of their lived experience. As a result, linking the key contextual factors in the convergence-divergence HRM debate to organisational strategies provides a holistic view of how social structures and cultural factors influence worker agency and lived experiences. The growing role and need for an effective HRM model in organisations is considered to be crucial in achieving business goals (Anyim *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, Anyim *et al.* (2011) argued that globalisation has increased the importance of linking workers' performance to organisational success, and this observation also correlates with the rise of studies in SHRM. The growing interest in SHRM practices at the workplace is thus considered to be linked to improving worker agency and lived experience through better collaboration amongst the workers in an organisation (Adeleye, 2011; Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Cristiania and Peiro, 2015).

HRM convergence debate advocates (e.g. Kerr *et al.*, 1962; Emirbayer and Mische, 1998; Ratner, 2000; Mufune, 2003; Beugelsdijk *et al.*, 2015) argue that a set of Western-inspired HRM standards can be implemented in any organisation irrespective of the context. In the same way, studies (e.g. Huselid and Becker, 2010; Abdulkadir, 2012) suggested that SHRM practices are associated with higher levels of performance in organisations. Thus, a topical issue that has frequently featured in management discussion is whether the connection between SHRM practices and measures of organisational performance is universal or contingent (Mufune, 2003; Galang, 2007; Budhwar and Aryee, 2008; Abdulkadir, 2012; Verma, 2012). The universalistic view advocates that certain categories of SHRM practices are more effective than others, and therefore can be implemented in any organisation with similar high performance outcomes (Budhwar and Aryee, 2008; Huselid and Becker, 2010). Convergence debates also hold the view that universal Western practices can improve the workers' lived experiences and consequently, an organisation's performance. Furthermore, Galang (2007) argued that globalisation brings about a movement of people across borders as well as the distribution of information and ideas resulting in cultural interconnectedness which may eventually lead to cultural homogeneity. Linking the SHRM model to the convergent HRM view, Galang (2007) contended that SHRM best practices promote organisational effectiveness and as organisations in various countries adopt these practices, HRM practices converge and management practices become similar. Galang (2007) further argued that the role of national institutions in shaping national SHRM has been superseded by supranational institutions such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Union (EU), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and African Union (AU). All of these supranational institutions exert regulatory, mimetic, structural pressures, and promote the spread of international best practices amongst organisations leading to homogeneity in HRM practices (Galang, 2007; Peng, 2009). Thus, irrespective of the size of an organisation, once an organisation adopts a set of standard SHRM practices (such as structured training programme, performance appraisals, employee voice, performance-based reward system), they are likely to achieve their organisational objectives (Muogbo, 2013). There is a resilient relationship between SHRM practices and improved workers' agency and workplace lived experience. However, there is no correlation between the workers' socio-cultural orientation and organisational success (*ibid.*). Muogbo's (2013) suggested that the appropriate application of SHRM best

practices will enhance worker agency and organisational performance. This viewpoint can be linked to the HRM convergence arguments which advocate the adoption of Western HRM best practices and discount the role of cultural values in organisational effectiveness (Kerr *et al.*, 1962; Jacob, 2005; Horwitz *et al.*, 2006; Rennie and McGee, 2012; Muogbo, 2013; McMahon, *et al.*, 2014).

SHRM studies (e.g. Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2009; Cristiania and Peiro, 2015) initially focused on a contingency perspective which emphasised the fit between HRM practices and policies and various strategic elements in organisations. However, studies in some emerging economies (e.g. Kamoche, 2002; Emeti, 2012) indicated that strategic management is mainly focussed on addressing contextual socio-political uncertainties. This viewpoint is similar to the divergent HRM debate which emphasises the role of national structures and cultures in shaping worker agency and workplace lived experiences (Hofstede, 1991). The SHRM perspective advances the divergence HRM debate by proposing that the design of HRM policies and practices should fit with the general strategy of the organisation, contextual structure and culture, and should equally be internally consistent in relation to policies and practices in other functional areas of the organisation (Cristiania and Peiro, 2015). The SHRM model emphasises the idea of an internal 'fit' that involves fitting the different parts of the HRM features and structure, organisational culture and worker agency to the organisations' objectives (Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2009; Cristiania and Peiro, 2015). Furthermore, Emeti (2012) argued that the multi-cultural nature of societies makes it difficult for organisations to develop a fit between SHRM and all cultures within a given country. Since in reality most countries are not culturally homogeneous, rather, what are obtainable targets are sub-cultures within national boundaries (Tayeb, 1988; Hofstede, 1991; Ukpata and Olukotun, 2008; Emeti, 2012). The argument here is that the various ways by which SHRM policies can be implemented are all human-driven and situations such as the environment, human behaviour, culture, sub-cultures, religion, socio-political and legal framework of a country can all influence the effectiveness of HRM approaches in achieving organisational objectives (Emeti, 2012). Thus, socio-cultural values and contexts are central to effective HRM practices which are linked to organisational success (Laurent, 1983; Hofstede, 1991; Whitley, 2000; Emeti, 2012). Socio-cultural centrality viewpoints can be linked to divergence, cross-vergence and trans-vergence HRM debates where indigenous norms shape HRM practices and the agency of workers to varying degrees (Laurent, 1983;

Hofstede, 1991; Whitley, 2000; Hickson and Pugh, 2001; Anakwe, 2002; Gupta and Wang, 2004; Adler, 2008; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Kamoche, 2011; Kavar, 2012; Horwitz *et al.*, 2012; Abugre, 2013; Abubakar, *et al.*, 2014). For example, the proponents of the cross-vergence approach suggest that traditional values should be fused with best practices while trans-vergence proponents argue that societal values should be transformed to enhance HRM practices and hence the organisations' success within the world economy (Gupta and Wang, 2004; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Kavar, 2012; Horwitz *et al.*, 2012; Abugre, 2013; Abubakar, *et al.*, 2014).

Drawing from the discussions in this section, one can infer that the SHRM model and IHRM debates of convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence together offer a broader explanation of the various socio-cultural factors and organisational strategies which influence worker agency and workplace lived experience. Consequently, illustrating how the SHRM model and IHRM debates combine together to influence worker agency and workplace lived experience.

Having achieved the aim of this section, which was to demonstrate how the SHRM model and existing IHRM debates combine to influence worker agency and workplace lived experience, it is now imperative to discuss how the SHRM model impacts on the workers' lifeworld within an African context. Thus, the next section will discuss a SHRM framework within an African context, the aim of which is to provide a socio-cultural context.

4.5 The Impacts of SHRM Models on African Worker Agency

Existing studies on African organisations (e.g. Abdulkadir, 2012; Emeti, 2012; Muogbo, 2013) have suggested that there is a correlation between SHRM practices and organisational effectiveness. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to discuss SHRM concepts and the various factors that shape its implementation in Africa. According to Kamoche (1997 & 2011), most of the HRM studies in Africa have narrowly focused on socio-cultural issues which are underpinned by cross-cultural management studies and resource-based theory (RBT). The RBT approach is used to investigate an organisation's strengths and weakness based on resource heterogeneity; underpinned by resources and capabilities that are scarce and imperfectly mobile (Barney, 2002; Besanko *et al.*, 2010; Becker and Huselid, 2010). However, cross-cultural studies and the RBT generally reflect on the role of national cultures and the effectiveness of Western concepts in shaping

SHRM policies and practices in Africa (Kamoche, 2011; Abdulkadir, 2012; Emeti, 2012; Muogbo, 2013). In an African social context, an organisation's competitive advantages are achieved through a network of relationships and close business-government connections, with organisations transforming into monopolies in their local markets (Kamoche, 1997; Hoskisson *et al.*, 2000). Consequently, when the socio-political structures in the country changes, the organisations' assets and strategies change with consequences on worker agency and workplace lived experience (Hoskisson *et al.*, 2000). Kamoche (1997) suggested that the HRM model in Africa is primarily procedural, but a more recent study by Kamcohe (2011) and Abdulkadir (2012) demonstrated that there is a growing link between HRM initiatives and an organisation's strategic objectives. Moreover, in African organisations, there is now an active and value-driven approach to the HRM model which is integrated with the organisations' strategies and worker agency (Abdulkadir, 2012).

HRM studies (e.g. Abdukadir, 2012; Emeti, 2012; Muogbo, 2013) in Africa and Nigeria particularly show movement from a HRM model to a SHRM framework with improved workers' workplace lived experience. For instance, the practice of the SHRM model has been observed to be prevalent in the Nigerian banking industry (e.g. Iyang, 2008; Adeleye, 2011; Emeti, 2012; Abdukadir, 2012; Akpan and Akpaetor, 2013). Extant HRM studies (e.g. Oladipo and Abdulkadir, 2011; Ajila *et al.*, 2012; Abdulkadir, 2012; Muogbo, 2013) also demonstrated that other industrial sectors in Nigeria are adopting the SHRM model to improve worker agency and lived experience such as the insurance industry; the manufacturing sector; the higher education sector; the local government councils and small to medium size enterprises. By the same token, Emeti (2012) argued that the SHRM model is widespread in African industrial sectors, as organisations seek to integrate HRM policies and practices with organisational strategies in order to improve the collective agency of workers and their business objectives. More importantly, for African organisations to achieve their business objectives through the adoption of the SHRM model, the workers need to be motivated in a way that will develop their skill sets and knowledge through career opportunities and improved work-lifeworld balance (Abdulkadir, 2012; Emeti, 2012; Adil, 2015). It is equally important for organisations to manage their workforce in line with the needs of the time while ensuring that worker agency is aligned to organisational strategies (Ajila *et al.*, 2012; Adil, 2015). Adil (2015) suggested that the workers' positive attitudes usually reflect their implied and overt

motivational factors which they also express in the form of their affective commitment towards employers and workplace lived experiences. Van Buren III *et al.* (2011) questioned the role of the SHRM model in addressing ethical issues arising from workers' actions and how it affects the various stakeholders, in particular the workers' agency and lived experience. Van Buren III *et al.* (2011) suggested that this may be due to the move from a HRM model to a SHRM framework being driven mostly by the broader social, legal, and political environment in addition to the organisations' quest for cost efficiency. In some emerging economies, such as Africa, it has been argued that one of the main barriers to organisational progress and profitability is the poor application of SHRM practices with negative consequences on the workers' agency, welfare and lifeworld (Van Buren III *et al.*, 2011; Ayanda, *et al.*, 2014; Adil, 2015). In the same way, in Nigeria, many organisations are characterised by structural and institutional weaknesses which according to Ayanda *et al.* (2014), constrain the organisations from benefiting from rapidly advancing processes of globalisation and SHRM practices.

The SHRM model does not always account for the behavioural patterns of the workers because most organisations focus mainly on the economic benefits alone (Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Van Buren III *et al.*, 2011). Boxall and Purcell (2011) argued that there must be 'social legitimacy' as organisations operate within societies in which there are laws that govern the workers' activities, traditions and commonly held expectations. The social legitimacy must be seen as a feature of SHRM model as employment laws vary from country to country, hence the differences in SHRM policies and practices across the world (*ibid.*). Jobs and employment are also high on political and regulatory agendas in many countries and therefore, the role of national context cannot be understated in the SHRM model (Adeleye, 2011). For example, contextual changes in Nigeria have been driven by the government's reform programmes, such as the banking sector reforms, pension fund schemes, insurance sector, civil service, and the privatisation and the commercialisation of national businesses (Ukpata and Olukotun, 2008). Ukpata and Olukotun (2008) contended that changes in government policies changed the economic outlook of the country, forcing organisations to rethink their organisational strategies, which in turn has changed the SHRM model and consequently, the workers' workplace lived experience. Some SHRM-related changes observed in Nigeria include the workers' learning and formal training, transfers, promotions, strategic recruitments, motivation and retentions, terminations and retirements (*ibid.*). Other impacts of the SHRM model on

organisations in Nigeria include new organisational cultures, new business strategies, sensitivity to social responsibilities and strategic re-engineering of systems and processes (*ibid.*). The Nigerian governmental reforms have also impacted on the organisations' structural changes as well as the workers' attitudinal changes and as a result, the workers' lifeworld lived experiences in general (*ibid.*).

It has been argued that the SHRM model improves worker agency and productivity and the ability of African organisations to achieve their objectives (Ukpata and Olukotun, 2008; Adeyeye, 2009; Muogbo, 2013; Omoijiade, 2014). Therefore, incorporating HRM practices into the strategic planning process should enable African organisations to better achieve their aims and objectives (Adeleye, 2011; Muogbo, 2013). The strategic approach to HRM involves planning and applying internally consistent HRM policies and practices that will make sure that an organisation's collective human agency (e.g. workers' collective knowledge, skill sets, activities and capabilities) contributes to the accomplishment of its business objectives (Omoijiade, 2014). According to Omoijiade (2014), a focus is not necessary on the workers' behaviour but on their skill sets, knowledge, attitudes and lived experiences which reinforce this, and which has a more sustained effect on long-term organisational success than existing behaviour. Furthermore, SHRM features which promote organisational success includes team work, worker participation and empowerment, workforce planning, work flexibility, workers' productivity and quality of output, management and executive development, succession and development planning for managers, advanced issue identification, workers and managers' communication, and work-lifeworld balance (Adeyeye, 2009; Adeleye, 2011; Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Omoijiade, 2014). However, recent reforms and the capitalization of the Nigerian banking sector brings to the fore the lack of importance attached to addressing the workers' needs, which is most apparent in times of major crisis or business opportunities (Badejo, 2015). According to Badejo (2015), there is a tendency for some Nigerian organisations to overemphasise on the business performance results which may inadvertently obscure the significance of the workers' agency and well-being.

Drawing from Badejo's (2015) arguments above, there is a need to make clear the role of the workers' agency in shaping the SHRM model in Nigerian organisations. However, Ituma and Simpson (2009) cautioned that overemphasising worker agency may obscure conditions that lie beyond the individuals' realm, thus making structure and culture a less proclaimed influence. Ituma and Simpson (2009) posited that in non-Western countries,

the structural barriers and cultural orientations determines an individual worker's agency and lived experience under the SHRM model and in the broader context. Hence, the diverse cultural heritage of Africa makes the role of social structures and cultures more prominent as either barriers or enablers (*ibid.*). According to Ituma and Simpson (2009), this approach allows for an in-depth insight into the socially constructed nature of the workers' workplace lived experience and careers. However, this viewpoint has been challenged in that contextual socio-cultural conditions alone do not shape workers' lived experience under the SHRM model in Africa (Heidegger, 1962; Husserl, 1997; Van Manen, 2009; Finlay, 2009; Bryman, 2012; Berggren, 2014; Budd, 2014; Fendt *et al.*, 2014; Omoijiade, 2014; Badejo, 2015).

More importantly, the choices and behaviours of workers under the SHRM model may be modified by the organisations' HRM structures, organisational strategies and contextual culture as suggested by Ituma and Simpson (2009). However, these choices and behaviours are a product of conscious, rational and intentional human decisions (Giddens, 1984; Husserl, 1997; Giorgi, 1997; Anakwe, 2002; Omoijiade, 2014; Badejo, 2015). Thus, it can be inferred from the above arguments that personal, environmental and experiential conditions inside and outside of the workplace mediates the relationship between the workers' workplace lived experience and the choices, behaviours and actions that they take under the SHRM model (Anakwe, 2002; Ituma and Simpson, 2009; Omoijiade, 2014). Workers as social actors are also responsible for configuring SHRM policies and practices through their choices, actions, attitudes and behaviours in the workplace (Nyambegera *et al.*, 2001; Anakwe, 2002; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Rupidara and McGraw, 2011; Emeti, 2012). The processes of configuring the SHRM model usually involves the management of complexity and conflicting pressures originating from a number of sources within and outside the organisation (Rupidara and McGraw, 2011). The influence and interplay of the complexities and conflicting pressures shapes the workers' agency and collective decision-making processes, where choices involve a compromise by necessity and implementation requires continuous modifications to SHRM systems (*ibid.*). It is therefore important to focus on the designing of SHRM systems by understanding how best to implement it as there are political aspects to implementation and the perceptions of SHRM priorities amongst workers may vary (Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2009; Rupidara and McGraw, 2011). Boxall and Purcell (2011) suggested that by adding the adjective 'strategic' to the HRM model, it denotes a

‘strategic choice’ decision which is associated with how worker agency and lived experiences are managed in organisations. One of the questions raised by the ‘strategic choice’ of a SHRM framework is how the HRM model can be more effective in improving the strategic management of human resource in organisations (*ibid.*). This, Boxall and Purcell (2011) contended, is the root of contention between the advocates of best practice and best fit models. The processes of configuring a SHRM model is influenced by a wide range of sources, such as worker agency, which is facilitated or constrained by socio-structural factors and contextual culture through a process of socialisation and intersubjective interactions amongst the workers (Rupidara and McGraw, 2011; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). In Africa, the SHRM model may be driven by the consciousness and intentionality of the agency of workers, but the embedment and practice is certainly within the social structures and contextual cultures (Kamoche, 2011; Rupidara and McGraw, 2011; Emeti, 2012). In implementing SHRM policies, workers attach meaning and judgement to the circumstances, establishing ideas about the expectations expected of them, and further shape their own experience of the situation (Rupidara and McGraw, 2011). Hence, whether an organisation practices the best practice or best fit SHRM model depends on the collective workers’ agency, the prevailing perceptions of workers, or the organisational structures and cultures that may exert influences on the workers’ thoughts processes, behaviours, attitudes and consequently actions (Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Rupidara and McGraw, 2011). Additionally, the choice of a SHRM model, though shaped by workers’ collective agency, is swayed by either the challenges of globalisation (best practice) or driven by the immediate structures and cultures of the indigenous markets (best fit) (Boxall and Purcell, 2011; Rupidara and McGraw, 2011). The two approaches illustrate the main ways of developing and implementing a SHRM model (Boxall and Purcell, 2011). Emeti (2012) contended that apart from these two approaches, there are other models of SHRM, but all of the models have one common aim, which is to find a better way of managing worker agency in order to achieve organisational objectives.

The above discussions have engaged with the literature on the impact of the SHRM model in Africa and it was identified that organisations can adopt two types of the SHRM model (e.g. best practice and best fit) (Boxall and Purcell, 2011). However, there is a need to understand how the two SHRM models are shaped by worker agency and how in turn, the SHRM models influences workers’ lived experiences. To achieve this, there is a need for

further discussion about the impact of best practice and best fit SHRM models on Africa workers. This will further inform our understanding of the nature of the SHRM model in African organisations. Thus, the next two sections below will present the SHRM models, starting with the next section which will discuss in detail the best practice approach. Thereafter, the best fit SHRM model will be presented in section 4.7.

4.6 The SHRM Best Practice/Universalistic Model in Africa

The aim of this section is to discuss the best practice or universalistic SHRM model in Africa and its effect on worker agency. This is important because having discussed an overview of the SHRM model in Africa, it is imperative to understand the nature of SHRM implementation and the driving factors. According to Boxall and Purcell (2011), most studies and theoretical debates in SHRM have been concerned with a contest between two normative models of how organisations should make strategic choices in a HRM model. The proponents of best practice (e.g. Delaney *et al.*, 1989; Huselid, 1995; Osterman, 1994; Pfeffer, 1994; Terpstra and Rozell, 1993; Huselid and Becker, 2010; Verma, 2012; Hamid, 2013) posited that all organisations will improve in performance if they identify and implement universal SHRM policies and practices. For example, Pfeffer (1994) suggested that the adoption of sixteen good management practices (e.g. employment security; selectivity in recruiting; incentive pay; employee ownership; information sharing; participation and empowerment; teams and job redesign; training and skills development; Promotion from within etc.) will ensure high productivity and improve workers' workplace lived experience. By the same token, Osterman (1994) highlighted a number of innovative work practices (e.g. teams; job rotation; quality circles; and total quality management) that will result in enhanced organisational performance and improved workplace lived experience when implemented. Terpstra and Rozell (1993) equally proposed five best HRM practices and found that the implementation of these practices had a moderate to positive correlation to organisational performance and the improved agency of workers.

The advocates of universalistic perspectives (e.g. Pfeffer, 1994; Osterman, 1994; Kuvaas and Dysvik, 2010; Verma, 2012) argued that the implementation of a set of, or the greater use, of specific SHRM best practices will always result in better (or worse) organisational performance and high performing workers. Kuvaas and Dysvik (2010) posited that the SHRM best practice model is believed to enhance the workers' agency and workplace lived experience through improved motivation, skills, approach to work, and

consequently, improved organisational performance. Advocates of the universalistic approach (e.g. Pfeffer, 1994; Osterman, 1994; Delery and Doty, 1996; Gooderham and Ringdal, 2008) argued that SHRM best practice measures are generalisable because there is a direct correlation between HRM practice and organisational performance, and the success of an organisation is best stated in financial performances. For example, according to Delery and Doty (1996), organisations with stronger wage-linked-performance practices achieve better long-term financial performance than organisations with weaker wage-linked-performance practices. The two seminal SHRM studies conducted by Pfeffer (1994) and Osterman (1994) are generally referred to collectively as best practices or universal practices, or high performance work practices (HPWP). Other universalistic approach advocates (e.g. Becker and Huselid, 1998; Armstrong and Baron 2002; Huselid and Becker, 2010) argued that there are SHRM best practices in which more than one HRM practice is bundled, forming HPWP. Armstrong and Baron (2002) contended that HPWP involves the bundling and implementation of many interconnected universal approaches, which when combined together, can impact on the performance of an organisation, the agency of workers and improved workers' workplace lived experience in general. To achieve the desired result of bundling HPWP, Armstrong and Baron (2002) suggested that organisations may need to motivate and improve the skills and morale of their workers. Furthermore, bundling workers' skill sets and motivation with improved organisational structures has been found to have a significant effect on worker agency and retention, organisational productivity and financial performance (Gooderham and Ringdal, 2008). In general, universalistic approaches to the SHRM model and organisational performance frequently involves the bundling or grouping of best practices in order to create more articulate explanations of the SHRM-performance link (*ibid.*).

According to Boxall and Purcell (2011), the SHRM best practice approach can be viewed from micro-foundation and macro-models. Micro-foundation models, according to Boxall and Purcell (2011), consider areas such as selection, training and appraisal, whereas the macro level looks at HRM systems. At the micro level, Boxall and Purcell (2011) argued that within Western cultural milieu dominated by USA and UK researchers, a fair argument to make is that management should reward high-performing individuals accordingly in order to gain their loyalty. However, with emphasis on individual results, the same approach may be counter-productive in countries that place high recognition on

group identification and interpersonal humility (*ibid.*). On a macro level, when SHRM systems such as HPWP are aligned with competitive strategy and operational goals, it may create value in addition to the prospective benefits of implementing SHRM best practices efficiently and effectively (Huselid and Becker, 2010).

Fajana *et al.* (2011) argued that the majority of SHRM policies and practices in African organisations are all adopted from other countries. In particular, the SHRM best practices model, in Nigerian, is mostly convergent with Western practices, with some indigenous values infused (Fajana *et al.*, 2011; Opara, 2011). It has been suggested that many African countries are improving their workers' workplace lived experience by adopting new management techniques and skills in supporting workers' agency and activities which is aimed at improving the organisations' financial status (Adeleye, 2011; Opara, 2011). Thus, the nature and objectives of SHRM practices in Africa cannot be entirely different from those practised in other countries (Adeleye, 2011; Fajana *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, there is growing evidence that Western SHRM policies and practices have been successfully implemented in some organisations in many emerging economies with improved workers' lived experiences (Adeleye, 2011). To illustrate, many organisations in Nigeria have started offering their workers continued education and training in order to develop their skill sets and to improve their workplace lived experience through career enhancing opportunities and collaborative work arrangements (Fajana *et al.*, 2011). The adoption of SHRM best practices has also been linked to an increase in the use of contract or temporary workers (*ibid.*). Most temporary work arrangements are contracted out to consultants through outsourcing organisations with the intention of reducing overhead costs (*ibid.*). However, Fajana *et al.* (2011) cautioned that the use of contract workers may imply that, although organisations have reduced overhead costs for a similar workload, organisations may actually be losing the psychological attachment, commitment, and loyalty of their workers. It is suggested that under the SHRM best practices model in Africa, performance appraisal is a mentoring process through an intersubjective dialogue between workers and managers, which shapes the individual workers' agency and their performance level (Fajana *et al.*, 2011; Opara, 2011). The performance appraisal processes are expected to be impartial based on assessments of the skills, technical knowledge and quality service delivery offered by individual workers (Fajana *et al.*, 2011). However, in many instances in African organisations, it has been observed that the limited mentoring/coaching skills level of managers has made the appraisal processes

ineffective (*ibid.*). As a result, such appraisal systems might not fulfil its objectives, which may include lessons learnt and career growth opportunities (*ibid.*). The need to develop the right performance appraisal system have thus forced indigenous African organisations to contract the services of expatriates as trainers or in job roles requiring special talents and expertise which are not readily available locally (*ibid.*). By the same token, the SHRM best practices model ensures that remuneration packages are based on job descriptions and assessments to ensure fairness, and that any increases are based on merit or performance (Fajana *et al.*, 2011; Okpara, 2011). Thus, remunerations increase with the increase in risk, time allocation, experience required and occupational hazards (Fajana *et al.*, 2011).

According to Olofin and Folawewo (2006), two key factors drive and affect the implementation of SHRM best practice in Africa; the limited African workers' skill sets and the complexity of today's business environment. For example, African organisations are outpaced by the complex business climate which has been driven by deregulation, globalisation, and technology advancements (*ibid.*). Khan and Ackers (2004) argued that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank's Western best practice management models imposed on indigenous African businesses has the potential to drive an organisation's culture towards Western SHRM policies and ideology, but the intended result was undermined by an 'African social system' that supported alternative relationship structures and social institutions. The reason for the failure, according to Khan and Ackers (2004), is that the proposed reforms were purely an economic solution to an employment problem with a root cause in durable contextual structures and cultures. Emeti (2012) also argued that the SHRM best practice model has challenges with implementation which may make the rhetoric different from reality. For instance, in Nigerian organisations, socio-cultural factors actively influence the implementation of best practices and workers' workplace lived experience (Eze, 2006; Emeti, 2012). By the same token, Kuvaas and Dysvik (2010) cautioned that for the SHRM best practice model to be effective, workers need to be motivated to respond to the universal practices in a way that profits the organisation and enhances the agency of workers. Armstrong and Baron (2002) warned that despite SHRM studies supporting the effectiveness of a best practice approach, it is still important to demonstrate how best practice models will be most appropriate in specific organisational circumstances. Thus, a distinction should be made between 'intended' and 'implemented' SHRM best practices, as workers may not

view the objective presence of some practices in the same manner that the business plans does (Kuvaas and Dysvik, 2010). Hence, there is a considerable variation in SHRM practices across organisations, because workers are sometimes unaware of the financial effects of not adopting an SHRM best practice framework (Huselid and Becker, 2010). If a SHRM best practice approach is implemented properly, Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2009) posited that the best practices provide a solid basis for SHRM activities, but warned that to attain a greater level of performance, contingent factors should be taken into consideration.

The benefits of SHRM best practice in African organisations may also be affected by the attitudes of long serving workers who hold onto traditional ways of working, bureaucratic organisational culture and poorly articulated organisational strategies (Emeti, 2012). Furthermore, culture can play a significant role in influencing the proper implementation of a SHRM best practice model, not just in Nigeria, but in most countries across the world (*ibid.*). Emeti (2012) suggested that it is important to curtail workers from using their agency according to their cultural orientation as this may negatively affect organisations' objectives and the work-world of other workers. Moreover, Emeti (2012) argued that the SHRM best practice model is more theoretical than practical because there is no single best practice approach for attaining consistent competitive advantages in all situations. As a consequence, societal values and national cultures are critical factors when implementing a SHRM model in organisations and in shaping workers' agency and workplace lived experience (Eze, 2006; Ukpata and Olukotun, 2008; Kats *et al.*, 2010). To illustrate, Eze (2001) argued that religion exerts a great influence on Nigerian workers' agency and perceptions where 'God's blessings' and living a sinless and moralistic life are considered good work values. According to Eze (2001), Nigerian workers are motivated more by religion and social affiliation than by science and any other management practices. The discussions above raise the importance of the effect of socio-cultural values' on the SHRM model (Eze, 2001; Ukpata and Olukotun, 2008). Therefore, there is a need to explore further how societal factors shapes the implementation of a SHRM model in Africa as well as the workers' agency and workplace lived experience.

So far, the discussions in this section have engaged with the perceptions of SHRM best practices or universal practices of HPWP in Africa. However, it was found that during discussions contingent factors invariably influence the implementation of a SHRM model

in Africa (Eze, 2001; Ukpata and Olukotun, 2008; Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2009; Kats *et al.*, 2010; Emeti, 2012). The consequences of which is that the intended SHRM best practice approach is actually SHRM best fit in practice (Emeti, 2012; Muogbo, 2013). Hence, there is an opportunity to further explore the perceptions of SHRM best fit practice in Africa and to understand how the contextual factors are managed. To achieve this aim, the next section will discuss the SHRM best fit in detail.

4.7 The SHRM Best Fit School/Contingent Model in Africa

The SHRM best fit proponents (e.g. Eze, 2006; Ukpata and Olukotun, 2008; Emeti, 2012; Akpan and Akpaetor, 2013; Muogbo, 2013; Badejo, 2015) argued for the inclusion of contingent factors in managing workers, and criticise the best practice approach for managing people to a common standard. In particular, the contingency or best fit approach counters the notion of universality and contends that it is problematic and impractical to categorise principles in a universal way, and to advocate that these principles would be able to adapt to all circumstances and conditions (Ariss, 2014; Jery and Souai, 2014; Beugelsdijk *et al.*, 2015; Hite, 2015; Hoorn, 2015). The aim of this section is to discuss how SHRM aligns with contextual socio-cultural factors to achieve organisational objectives. Armstrong and Baron (2002) contended that the benefit of benchmarking is in promoting best practice; however, there can be no universal best practices in all situations, hence the need to fit SHRM practices to the contextual situation. Armstrong and Baron (2002) also suggested that the starting point for organisations should be an analysis of its needs within its culture, structure, process, and technological contexts. Moreover, various SHRM practices are influenced by different national socio-cultural values and practices, and it is the responsibility of the managers to understand and balance these different traditions and norms with the organisation's objectives (Kats *et al.*, 2010). For example, the workers' perceptions of a successful career may have different connotations in Asian and African cultures compared to Western cultures (*ibid.*). Proponents of the best fit approach (e.g. Kats *et al.*, 2010; Waiganjo *et al.*, 2012; Jery and Souai, 2014) advocated that managers' strategic choices in the SHRM model should include considerations for stakeholder interests, contingent factors (e.g. societal values, industry and organisational environment, and labour laws) and critical workers' agency and interests. In other words, the contingent factors and interest groups may affect an organisations' performance, workers' productivity and accordingly, the workers' lived experience (Jery and Souai, 2014). The key assumptions

of the advocates of the SHRM best fit approach are that the alignment of business strategies and HRM practices with contextual factors enables organisations to improve their performance, and that the organisations with the best fit gets the best results (Kats *et al.*, 2010; Jerry and Souai, 2014; Badejo, 2015).

According to Nyambegera *et al.* (2001), workers are a product and a reflection of childhood experiences because of family upbringing, religious creed, traditions, forms of education with all of the associated values and belief systems that influence behaviour and expectations. Thus, the workers' collective agency and experience, as well as their ability to use their agency in the interests of their organisation, are now recognised as making a substantial contribution to organisational success (Waiganjo *et al.*, 2012). For organisations to influence workers' attitudes and behaviours and to achieve organisational success, there must be a fit or congruence of society-person-organisation (Nyambegera *et al.*, 2001). Waiganjo *et al.* (2012) posited that because there is no universal prescription of HRM policies and practices, organisational success is contingent on the context, culture and organisational strategies. Anyim *et al.* (2011) argued that African cultures have an important impact on implementing a SHRM model. For example, cultural orientation differs in how workers expect a leader to lead, and on what motivates the individual workers (*ibid.*). Anyim *et al.* (2011) also argued that the morale and cultural fabric of a society largely informs the agency of the workers and their lived experiences under the SHRM model. For that reason, organisations should ensure that there is a societal fit when developing and implementing a SHRM model (Boxall and Purcell, 2011). Boxall and Purcell (2011) posited that organisations will achieve a societal fit when the HRM strategies of the organisations are aligned to the value propositions in the society in which the organisations are situated.

Organisations rely on the services of a network of different members of society, including workers and agencies of the government (Boxall and Purcell, 2011). Not only must managers try to reach the profit goals set by business owners, but they must also try to deal with the drivers of workers' satisfaction and workplace lived experiences as well as with broad notions of social legitimacy (*ibid.*). Organisations that seek social legitimacy must therefore comply with labour laws and union arrangements of the nations they operate in (*ibid.*). According to Dowling and Pfeffer (1975), social legitimacy is when organisations strive to align the perceived social values attached to their activities with norms of conventional behaviour in the broader society of which they are a part.

Therefore, organisations striving for social legitimacy will achieve societal fit (Boxall and Purcell, 2011). In addition to the organisations' SHRM best fit practices aiming for societal fit, Boxall and Purcell (2011) identified two other analytical levels of fit which are industry fit and organisational fit. Industry fit sums up how SHRM is affected by the relationship between organisations and the economic, technological and socio-political factors that are peculiar to individual industries (Boxall and Purcell, 2011). For example, different industries have different attributes such as the difference between private and public, or the differences between manufacturing and services sectors' business propositions (Kats *et al.* 2010; Boxall and Purcell, 2011). Whereas organisational fit relates to how managers shape the SHRM model to fit with other key features within an organisation including its wider strategy and structure (Boxall and Purcell, 2011). Furthermore, the organisational fit argument suggests that specific aspects of SHRM systems should be in congruence with particular organisational outcomes (Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2009). However, organisational fit may be hampered by bureaucratic organisational culture and ambiguous strategic approaches (Abdukadir, 2012; Emeti, 2012). Striving to achieve the desired organisational outcomes may be further convoluted by the dual roles that SHRM managers traditionally play as both representatives of employers and advocate for workers' interests (Lengnick-Hall *et al.*, 2009). Moreover, when the organisations' strategic initiatives are not clear, workers' perception may be different from the organisations' objectives (Abdulkadir, 2012).

According to Emeti (2012), the best SHRM approach for culturally diverse African organisations is a best fit model because of the various social structures and cultural factors that shapes worker agency and workplace lived experience. However, the proper application of a SHRM best fit model is limited because there are no clear cut theoretical pathways to the model itself (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the SHRM best fit model in African organisations should incorporate some important socio-cultural values, such as seniority by age of birth (*ibid.*). Emeti (2012) recommended that top positions within organisations should be by qualification and age, that is, qualified older managers should be given a top position role as this will be in congruence with the African value of respect for seniority by age of birth. Hence, seniority by age helps senior managers to gain loyalty from their subordinates in African organisations (Emeti, 2012). In addition, for example, decisions about how work is to be carried out should be mostly done in groups and praise habitually used as reward for any worker who contributes extra to his or her group's objectives (Eze,

2006; Emeti, 2012). It is therefore important to ensure that there is an alignment between workers' values, worker agency and organisational HRM strategies as evidence suggests that workers' attitudes and behaviour are increasingly important for organisational success (Becker and Huselid 1998; Olofin and Folawewo, 2006; Ukpata and Olukotun, 2008; Adeyeye, 2009; Fajana *et al.*, 2011; Olajide, 2014). However, the extent of the SHRM best fit model practice in Africa has been questioned (Kamoche 1997; Nyambegera *et al.*, 2001). To illustrate, Kamoche (1997) posited that African workers are under enormous financial constraints due to the extended family structure, which in most cases is not reflected in the reward and compensation schemes of the organisations.

Moreover, Nyambegera *et al.* (2001) argued that sometimes fit does not always matter as African organisations adopt Western SHRM practices enhancing organisational performance rather than adopting SHRM policies to match their local workforce preferences. Consequently, African workers feel pressurised to adapt and align their values and agency with the organisation's Western SHRM policies and practices (*ibid.*). Accordingly, African management writers (e.g. Kamoche, 2002; Khan and Acker, 2004; Gbadamosi, 2005) argued that although African workers adapt their agency and values to their organisations' Western SHRM, their internal logic and African thought systems remains largely unchanged. The result of the imposed Western SHRM model is a frequent source of conflict between the intended HRM policies and the actual practices as the African workers pre-reflexively draw from traditions and indigenous beliefs (Nzelibe, 1986; Ahiauzu, 1989; Adigun, 1995; Anakwe, 2002; Khan and Acker, 2004; Gbadamosi, 2005). From an African experiential perspective, Adenuga and Ilupeju (2012) questioned the provisions of the SHRM best fit model in protecting the workers' dignity especially when organisations adopted a best fit approach to such an extreme extent where women workers are not protected from sexual harassment. Becker and Huselid (1998) suggested that SHRM best fit or contingency perspective has faced criticism in that it offers a limited range of strategy-HRM-worker agency matches with little difference in their implication for HRM as a source of competitive advantage. By the same token, Lengnick-Hall *et al.* (2009) critiqued the desirability of the SHRM best fit model during times of transition as flexibility is preferred. In the same vein, Fajana *et al.* (2011) contended that another area of the SHRM model that requires attention is occupational health and safety. Fajana *et al.* (2011) suggested that there is no dependable official statistic on the number of deaths in organisations in Nigeria. According to Fajana *et al.* (2011), the lack of

reliable statistics may be due to the unwillingness of Nigerian organisations to share their experiences with others because of the fear of being accused of not managing health and safety problems appropriately, and recompensing the victims sufficiently. Fajana *et al.*'s (2011) also suggest the weakness of the labour laws in Nigeria. As stated before, the gaps identified in the implementation of the SHRM best fit model in Africa has been linked to lack of adequate theoretical model which can be used to guide SHRM professionals and managers (Delery and Doty, 1996; Emeti, 2012). Additionally, Delery and Doty, (1996) argued that the SHRM best fit viewpoints are more complex than best practice perspectives because the best fit arguments suggest interactions between workers and contextual factors, rather than a linear relationship advocated by best practice proponents.

To conclude this chapter, it is important to put the discussion in this section into the theoretical context of the current research. This is important because the theoretical viewpoint adopted for the current research recognises the dimensions of structure, culture and agency, and the interactions of the three dimensions in shaping the Nigerian workers' perceptions of their lived experience. More specifically, how Nigerian workers' use their agency in relation to their perceptions of their workplace lived experience is key to this study. Chapter Two has presented the main discussions on the phenomenological and the theoretical dimension adopted in this thesis, however, there is a need for further discussion due to some of the key contributions from the SHRM debates in Chapters Three and Four. By linking the philosophical stance, theoretical dimensions and key literature, the following section will shed more light on the key concepts and ideas which forms the basis of this thesis. More so, this will set the scene for the methodological approach and the nature of data to be gathered which is required to answer the research questions. Therefore, the purpose of Section 4.8 is to summarise and align the key debates discussed in Chapters two, three and four.

4.8 Linking the Phenomenological and Theoretical Dimensions to the SHRM Debates

The key contribution of this section is to engage with the theoretical dimensions under the SHRM debates. Hence, the discussion in this section will start by theorising the SHRM debates using the two seminal works of Wright and McMahan (1992) and Delery and Doty (1996). The phenomenological stance taken in this thesis suggests that human agency is the 'giver' of meaning to structure and culture through rational conscious actions which may manifest in the form of attitudes and behaviours of individual workers (Van Manen, 2007; Giorgi, 2008; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). For example, a SHRM model

requires human agency to link HRM policies (structure) to organisational strategies (structure) to achieve an organisation's objectives (Wright and McMahan, 1992; Delery and Doty, 1996; Fendt *et al.*, 2014; Fotis, 2014). Also, the workers (agents) conceive and initiate the linkage of the HRM policies to organisational strategies through conscious rational thoughts based on their perceptions of their lived experience or lifeworld (Delery and Doty, 1996; Finlay, 2009; Englander, 2012). The view taken in this thesis is that worker agency is influenced by organisational structures and contextual cultures, hence the resultant effect is the effectiveness and type of SHRM approaches (e.g. universalistic or contingency perspective) practised (Khan and Acker, 2004; Van Manen, 2007; Giorgi, 2008; Kamoche, 2011; Emeti, 2012).

SHRM theorists (e.g. Wright and McMahan, 1992; Osterman, 1994; Delery and Doty, 1996) argued that the debate in the universalistic approach is similar to the HRM convergence viewpoint in that there is a simple direct correlation between worker agency and a set of best practices. That is, once a best practice approach is implemented, worker agency converges towards a common practice which enhances both organisational performance and the workers' workplace lived experiences (Pfeffer, 1994; Huselid, 1995; Fotis, 2014). Thus, the universalistic approach requires two steps (Delery and Doty, 1996). The first step requires that human agency identifies important SHRM practices that relates to organisational performance (*ibid.*). The second step requires worker agency to link individual practices to organisational performance (*ibid.*). To illustrate, the organisations through worker agency can identify and adopt formal training systems where workers are given requisite training to improve their skill sets in order to achieve a set of organisational objectives (*ibid.*).

Delery and Doty (1996) contended that the appraisal system should focus on worker agency in relation to the type of behaviour needed to achieve organisational success. A behaviour-based appraisal approach is essential for job effectiveness as a results-oriented appraisal only focuses on the consequences of the behaviours (*ibid.*). Conversely, Emeti (2012) criticised universalistic approaches in that even with the best intentions, all implementations of best practices require human agency mediation. The human agency mediation, Emeti (2012) posited, is in one form or other influenced by contextual structures and cultures. Hence, theoretically the SHRM best practice model sounds plausible, but is in reality, impracticable (*ibid.*). SHRM studies in Africa and elsewhere outside of the Western world (e.g. Adeleye, 2011; Anyim *et al.*, 2011; Fajana *et al.*, 2011;

Oladipo and Abdulkadir, 2011; Kamoche, 2011; Abdulkadir, 2012; Adegoroye and Oladejo, 2012; Ajila *et al.*, 2012; Emeti 2012; Akpan and Akpaetor, 2013; Muogbo, 2013) suggested that even when the best practices are imposed on workers, the workers' thought processes and agency do not necessarily align, leading to conflict in their perceptions of their workplace lived experience or a modified SHRM practice, where HRM strategies are contingent on national structure and culture.

Unlike the universalistic approach, the contingent approach to SHRM is an interaction between the human agency and the contextual factors of structures and culture (Wright and McMahan, 1992; Delery and Doty, 1996). The key underlying assumption is that there are no best practices to SHRM, but that each SHRM approach is contingent on local circumstances where the choice of implementation lies with human agency (Wright and McMahan, 1992; Fotis, 2014). Thus, the underlying assumption of the contingency approach is similar to the divergent viewpoints, and to some extent, the cross-vergence and trans-vergence stance (Laurent, 1983; Hofstede, 1991; Anakwe, 2002; Gupta and Wang, 2004; Adler, 2008; Kawar, 2012). According to Delery and Doty (1996), if an organisation knows what workers' agentic behaviours need to achieve its objectives, then the organisation will put in place policies and procedures that will promote these behaviours (*ibid.*). The organisation thus would simply be bringing into line the interests of organisations and workers (agent), and any organisation that ensures a better alignment of these interests will achieve greater performance (*ibid.*). As observed by Emeti (2012), there are no theoretical models for the contingency perspective, as each approach depends on the individual contextual circumstances. However, most of the studies (e.g. Hofstede, 1991; Tayeb, 2000; Trompenaar and Hampden-Turner, 2005) driving the theoretical undertone of the contingency view are based on cultural typologies which in many instances, irrevocably equates work-related values to national values. The view taken in this study is that work-related values are influenced by national values, but are a distinct phenomena, and independent of each other (Adeleye, 2011). Furthermore, from a phenomenological perspective, workers are not passive recipients of cultural values, but rather, they are intentional, rational agents capable of pre-reflexive thinking and they make choices based on self-interest (Van Manen, 2007; Giorgi, 2008; Finlay, 2009).

A key contribution of this thesis from a theoretical perspective is the use of a phenomenology paradigm to explore the workers' perceptions of their lived experience under the SHRM model. Most of the existing studies in SHRM (e.g. Kiessling and

Harvey, 2005; Anyim *et al.*, 2011; Ajila *et al.*, 2012; Chung *et al.*, 2012; Hite, 2015; Hoorn, 2015) focussed more on the SHRM best practices processes (structure) or contingent contextual cultural factors in achieving organisational success, without exploring the workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experience and how the workers use their conscious pre-reflexive rational thoughts to make choices within their lifeworld (Finlay, 2009). Another important contribution of this thesis is in using the phenomenological approach to enrich the growing debates on the nature of SHRM in Africa by gaining an in-depth insight into how Nigerian workers view their work-world. Most of the existing studies on the HRM model in Africa (e.g. Khan and Ackers, 2004; Iyang, 2008; Ukpata and Olukotun, 2008; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Kamoche, 2011; Abdukadir, 2012; Adegoroye and Oladejo, 2012; Ajila *et al.*, 2012; Emeti 2012; Akpan and Akpaetor, 2013; Muogbo, 2013) adopted a positivist approach. A key difference in the theoretical approaches is the subjective first-hand narrative findings based on the Nigerian workers' perception of their lifeworld as lived by them using the phenomenology paradigm (Van Manen, 2007; Giorgi, 2008; Finlay, 2009).

In summary, the phenomenological framework has informed us of the three dimensions of structure, culture and agency, and their interactions. In turn, the philosophical paradigm and the dimensions has shaped the discussions in the broader IHRM and SHRM debates as illustrated in Figure 4.1 below. Figure 4.1 gives a visual illustration of the interactions of the key literature in this thesis. Thereafter, a concluding section is provided to summarise how the aim of this chapter was achieved.

4.9 Discussions and Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to use the existing studies to discuss how the workers' agency and their workplace lived experiences are shaped by organisational strategies using the SHRM model in Africa. This chapter also sought to engage with the existing literature on debates on how workers' agency and contextual factors shapes organisational strategies which in turn, influences the HRM model in Africa. It was observed in Chapter Three that HRM and IHRM debates on their own could not fully account for workers' agency and workplace lived experience in Africa. This gap needed to be addressed because the main aim and objective of this study is to examine the perceptions of workers' lived experience under the SHRM model. Furthermore, to achieve the aim and objective of the thesis, it was essential to engage with the social structures and cultural factors that influences worker agency and their workplace lived experience. Thus, two

bodies of knowledge (e.g. IHRM and SHRM) have been brought together to demonstrate how organisational strategies are influenced by global HRM practices as well as national socio-structural and contextual cultural factors to shape the workers' perceptions. Thereafter, it became apparent that further discussions were needed to understand how organisations actually implement a SHRM model either using the best practice or best fit approaches. Understanding how organisations implement the SHRM model is important as it advanced the discussions on which model (e.g. best practices or best fit) organisations consider and emphasises when implementing strategies. Organisational strategies are used to guide worker agency towards shared organisational objectives through a process of intersubjective social interaction in the workplace.

So far, Chapters Two, Three and Four have engaged with the key literature linking IHRM, cross-cultural management and SHRM to workers' perceptions using a phenomenological paradigm. The literature review chapters have identified key topics around the thesis's aim and research questions which will inform the fieldwork, the nature of data to be collected and further discussions. However, due to the exploratory nature of this research, as well as any issues, gaps and problems identified in the existing literature, there is a need for further investigation. There is a need to develop a methodological framework to guide the fieldwork in order to provide the relevant data that will address the research questions, and therefore achieve the aims of the study. To reiterate the goals of this current study, below is the research aim and objectives, and the research questions that need to be answered.

The aim of the research is:

- To explore the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences under the HRM and SHRM model.

The following objectives have been identified that will help to achieve the overarching aim of this current research:

1. To evaluate how a phenomenological framework can be used to understand the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experience under the HRM and SHRM models.

2. To understand how the theoretical dimensions of structure, culture and agency affects the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences.

To achieve the research aim, the following research questions have been identified and they need to be addressed:

1. To what extent does the HRM model in Nigerian banks affect skilled workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experiences?
2. To what extent does the SHRM model in Nigerian banks affect the skilled workers' perceptions of their work-life lived experiences?
3. To what extent are the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences affected by their organisations strategies under the SHRM model?

Together, the findings are expected to provide an exploratory yet holistic account of Nigerian skilled bank workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experience. The findings will be based on the subjective accounts of individuals who have experienced a phenomenon first-hand, and thus, it is important to develop an appropriate research design and methodological approach to examine these perceptions (Finlay, 2009; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, it is essential to ensure that the methodological approach is consistent with the phenomenological framework and theoretical dimensions. To this end, the next stage of the research is the presentation and discussion of the methodological framework designed to gather the data that will address the research aim and questions. Chapter Five presents the research design and methodology for gathering the relevant data in order to answer the research questions and to achieve the aim of the thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss a research methodology, strategy and methods which has been framed by the research questions and the phenomenological framework identified in Chapters One and Two respectively. This is important because the research methodology and design guides the researcher in planning and implementing the study in a manner that is most likely to realise the proposed goal (Silverman, 2010; Smith *et al.*, 2010; Bryman, 2012). There are many methodologies and research methods available to social researchers, and it is important to build a solid theoretical and philosophical foundation in which to conduct a doctorate research (Bryman, 2012). It is therefore imperative that the methodology strengthens the overall research strategy as the option of methodology is often orientated by the phenomenon under study (Silverman, 2010). To explore the gaps in the existing literature, as well as to answer the research questions, there is a need to gather data that will address the research questions in order to achieve the aim of the study. As this research is an exploratory study of human experiences within an African socio-cultural context, it is necessary that an appropriate method of collating data is adopted that will ensure consistency between the research methodology and the research method (Chenail, 2011; Bryman, 2012). As a result, this chapter is structured into inter-linked sections.

The research strategy is discussed in Section 5.2, assessing the quantitative versus qualitative traditions. Thereafter, Section 5.3 presents the research methodology from a phenomenological perspective. Section 5.3 considers the ontological, epistemological and methodological limitations of phenomenology. The chapter then progresses to Section 5.4, where the research methods are discussed with a focus on sampling design and size, data collection methods, the interview process, data analysis and interpretation, reliability and the validity of the research methods. Section 5.5 presents the researcher's reflexivity and reflections, and Section 5.6 discusses the research participants' demographic details. Furthermore, Section 5.7 highlights some of the ethical considerations and the Chapter is concluded with a summary in Section 5.8.

As argued in Chapter Two, phenomenology provides a valid paradigm which can be used to explore human experiences, hence the methodology will suggest a qualitative approach to data gathering (Collis and Hussey, 2003; Bryman, 2012; Pringle *et al.*, 2011).

However, there are other relevant research strategies and traditions used by researchers in social inquiry (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). There is a need to examine the research traditions available to social researchers and argue for one that is more consistent with the theoretical framework and methodology of this study. Therefore, the next section will engage with the research strategy and traditions available to social researchers.

5.2 Research Strategy - Quantitative Versus Qualitative Traditions

The aim of this section is to engage with the existing literature on quantitative and qualitative traditions in order to identify the most appropriate research strategy which is consistent with a phenomenology paradigm. Social inquiry consists of research strategies for sampling, data gathering and analyses as well as ideas about the social world and the nature of the knowledge which sometimes reflects contradictory and competing views of social reality (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Bryman, 2012). The links between phenomenology, the theoretical dimensions and the type of data to be gathered in this study suggests that both quantitative and qualitative approaches can be considered to be two distinct clusters of research strategies (Bryman, 2012). Quantitative research in general terms involves the gathering of numerical data, a deductive relationship between theory and research, and a preference for a positivist natural science approach with an objective orientation of social reality (*ibid.*). A deductive relationship between theory and research suggests that the research is carried out with reference to hypothesis and generalisations drawn from the theory (Bryman and Bell, 2003; Creswell, 2007). Also, a positivist approach is based on creating a universal law and a quest for objectivity and neutrality (Bryman and Bell, 2003). As a result, one of the attributes of quantitative research is the search for objectivity and distance between the researcher and those studied so that biases are avoided (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, quantitative research entails seeking patterns, regularities, measurements, causalities, replications and generalisations for human actions in the social world (*ibid.*). Furthermore, social researchers (e.g. Creswell, 2007; Finlay, 2009) have criticised quantitative research in that it does not take into account the cognizant participants' perspectives within the context of their lifeworld, such as answering subjective and complex human situations. Further criticism of quantitative research is that its measurement processes can give a false sense of precision and accuracy, and the analyses of the interactions between quantitative variables constructs a stationary worldview that is independent of human lived experiences (Bryman, 2012).

As a research strategy, qualitative research is grounded in a philosophical position which is broadly inductivist, interpretivist and constructionist in which the social lifeworld is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced by human agency through interactions with social structures and cultures (Bryman and Bell, 2003; Schurink, 2003; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). An inductivist viewpoint of qualitative research suggests a link between theory and research in which the former is derived from the latter (Bryman and Bell, 2003; Bryman, 2012). By the same token, an inductivist perspective is consistent with the philosophical position of this study as it emphasises how humans attach meanings to structures and cultures within their lifeworld (Saunders *et al.*, 2003; Mapp, 2008). An interpretivist approach suggests that qualitative research is not designed to explicate human behaviour by generalising or inferring universally applicable laws, but rather, to understand and interpret the meanings and intentions that underpin daily human agency, structure and culture (Schurink, 2003). Hence, social researchers use qualitative approaches to explore behavioural patterns, perceptions, feelings, opinions and lived experiences of individuals and what lies at the core of their daily life within a socio-cultural lifeworld context (Schurink, 2003; Chenail, 2011). The main aim of qualitative research is to develop an understanding of how the lifeworld is constructed which suggests a constructionist perspective (Schurink, 2003). A constructivist perspective suggests that reality is relative and that the lifeworld cannot reflect the true picture as it is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Schurink, 2003). Therefore, the research findings are produced through social interactions between a researcher and the research participants (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Sandberg and Dall’Alba 2009). As a result, the researchers use the qualitative method to provide ‘deeper’ insights into social phenomena or the lifeworld (Silverman, 2010). In other words, qualitative research studies aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and perceptions (Chenail, 2011; Bryman, 2012). As a research methodology, the qualitative approach emphasises words rather than numbers in the gathering and analyses of data (Bryman, 2012).

Qualitative research has a long and recognised record in academic disciplines which cuts across many traditions such as biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case studies (Schurink, 2003; Creswell, 2007; Chenaill, 2011). A considerable qualitative tradition can be found in psychology studies based on Husserlian (1952) phenomenology. Although a qualitative research utilises phenomenological perspective,

social writers (e.g. Sandberg, 2005; Creswell, 2007; Starks and Trinidad, 2007; Chenaill, 2011) make a distinction between phenomenology, symbolic interaction, ethnomethodology, cultural studies, feminism, post-modernism, and critical theory. Hence, the methodological stance taken in this thesis acknowledges phenomenological framework as a qualitative tradition because the aim of the study is to gather human perceptions of their lived experiences within the structure and culture of their lifeworld (Finlay, 2007; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, human perceptions and lived experiences are a form of subjective data which does not lend itself to generalisation or universally valid laws (Giorgi, 1997; Van Manen, 2007; Kafle, 2011). Therefore, a qualitative approach will allow this social inquiry to gather the data of the Nigerian workers' lifeworld, and their perceptions can be explicated and examined for wider interpretive meaning (Van Manen, 2007; Bryman, 2012; Englander, 2012). Furthermore, when investigating the perceptions of individuals within a certain social cluster, a qualitative research strategy that is sensitive to how participants perceive their social world, may be the appropriate choice (Kafle, 2011; Berggren, 2014; Gill, 2014). According to Sandberg (2005), qualitative interpretive approaches offer new ways of studying previously unexplored social inquiries. Consequently, qualitative research methods allow for management researchers to conduct investigations that have led to new forms of knowledge about SHRM (*ibid.*). However, the findings and knowledge generated might not always generalise to other people or other socio-cultural lifeworld settings (Chenail, 2011; Gill, 2014). Consequently, the next section engages with the literature on a research methodological orientation. This will ensure that the ontological and epistemological considerations align with the phenomenological stance and the qualitative tradition of this present study. By doing so, there will be consistency between the theoretical framework, the methodology and the research methods.

5.3 Research Methodological Orientation – A Phenomenological Perspective

A key issue identified from the discussions in the previous chapters is the need to link one's theoretical perspective to the methodology and research methods because theoretical perspectives influence and dictate methodological approaches (Chenail, 2011; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Bryman, 2012). Moreover, theoretical perspectives and methodological orientation are often informed by the type of research questions that a study is seeking to answer, that is, the nature of the problem or phenomenon under inquiry (Bryman, 2012). Thus, this section provides links between the phenomenological and

theoretical dimensions and the choice of methodology, and the methodology will in turn shape the research design. It was established in Chapter Two that the exploratory nature of the research questions inferred a phenomenological paradigm because the research questions seek to gather the perceptions and lived experiences of individuals. The view taken in this thesis was that the phenomenological perspective acknowledged three theoretical dimensions of structure, culture and agency, where agency is viewed as the 'giver' of meaning to structure and culture (Van Manen, 2007; Giorgi, 2008; Fendt *et al.*, 2014).

As a research methodology, phenomenology aims to understand human perceptions of their lived experience as it is consciously experienced by the person before being interpreted or taken for granted within the structures and cultures of their lifeworld (Van Manen, 2007; Finlay, 2009; Kafle, 2011). Phenomenology is used primarily in social inquiry to generate rich textual descriptions and close analyses of the lived experiences of selected phenomena in order to understand how meaning is created through individuals' embodied perception of the lifeworld (Starks and Trinidad, 2007; Kafle, 2011). Through close investigation of people's experiences, phenomenological researchers aim to understand the meaning and common structures, or essences, of an experience or a phenomenon or an event (Starks and Trinidad, 2007; Finlay, 2009). The truth about an experience or a phenomenon or an event as an entity, is subjective and knowable through embodied perceptions because humans create meanings through the experience of moving through space and across time (Starks and Trinidad, 2007). According to Husserl (1997), truth is not known through deductive thinking from prior suppositions, but rather, it is given, or known in consciousness and made explicit by a way of accurate description of the contents therein. In the same way, reality is known through embodied experience (*ibid.*).

The qualitative phenomenological approach of this study has framed a methodological direction for the research fieldwork which is to gather and understand the workers' conscious perceptions of their lived experiences of certain phenomena within the structures and cultures of their lifeworld (Starks and Trinidad, 2007; Finlay, 2009). By doing so, we will know the truth and reality about the studied workers' embodied experience of their social world and their agency therein (Kafle, 2011). However, the arguments above do not tell us what constitutes truth or reality and more so, how the embodied experiences can be investigated and understood by a social researcher. The

question of what and how to go about investigating the phenomena underpins the phenomenological perspective and methodological orientation of this thesis, and thus, they will need to be answered (Husserl, 1997; Van Manen, 2007; Finlay, 2009; Kafle, 2011). Answering the questions (what and how) is important as it has implications on the research design, data gathering and interpretations (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, to answer the question of what constitutes knowledge, truth and reality, and how to investigate this knowledge, the next sections will engage with the literature on ontology and epistemology, guided by a phenomenological paradigm respectively. Usually, ontology is considered in tandem with epistemology to provide a methodological focus for a research fieldwork (Bryman, 2012). In order to provide a clearer argument on how ontology and epistemology is viewed under phenomenology, the next sub-section will discuss the ontological considerations of this study.

5.3.1 Ontological Considerations

The discussion above has identified the need to understand what constitutes knowledge, truth and reality. Thus, the aim of this sub-section is to address the issue of what constitutes social reality or knowledge from a phenomenological perspective. The issue is addressed by engaging with existing discussions on ontology. It is important to consider ontological issues because one of the underpinning concepts of phenomenology is the question of the nature of reality and being in the world (Husserl, 1991; Lavery, 2003; Cardinal *et al.*, 2004). The concept of ontology differs among social scientists (e.g. Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Tayeb, 2000; Lavery, 2003; Cardinal *et al.*, 2004; Creswell, 2007) and hence, the definition of ontology adopted in this thesis is; “*ontology is the study of being in general or of what there is*” (Cardinal *et al.*, 2004:148). From the definition of ontology adopted above, being in the world is the essence of knowledge in phenomenology, as humans cannot be separated from their experiences (Heidegger, 1962). Accordingly, humans and their lived experiences co-constitute each other and are unable to exist without the other (*ibid.*). Husserl’s (1952) earlier position on ontology in phenomenology was that humans were capable of a direct grasp of consciousness which is demonstrated through intentionality and bracketing. However, Heidegger (1962) challenged Husserl’s (1952) concept of bracketing and argued that bracketing was impossible because one cannot stand outside his or her pre-understandings and one’s lived experience.

From an interpretative phenomenological perspective, social reality is co-constructed by individuals who use their agency to intentionally interact and give meaning to the structures and cultures in their lifeworld (Lavery, 2003; Finlay, 2009). As a consequence, the search for truth, knowledge and reality in people's lived experiences of certain phenomena is achieved through the rigorous explication of their perceptions of such experiences (Lavery, 2003). Ontological considerations in phenomenology are concerned within the nature of social structures, culture or phenomena which are perceived as being socially constructed by human agency, that is, through the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman 2012). Another ontological consideration is that the primary research object within the interpretive phenomenological research tradition is human lived experience of their reality within their lifeworld (Lavery, 2003; Bryman, 2012). The lifeworld is an individual's experience of reality, and at the same time, it is objective in the sense that it is an intersubjective world of the social actors (Lavery, 2003; Sandberg, 2005). Individuals share the lifeworld with others through their lived experience of it, and constantly use their agency to engage in negotiations with other subjects (Sandberg, 2005). The lifeworld is also objective in that it transcends the subjects because the lifeworld's qualities are not exclusively tied to the subjects' lived experience of it (*ibid.*). At the same time, the lifeworld is inseparable from the subjects through their experience of it (*ibid.*).

From a socio-cultural contextual perspective, the ontological viewpoint considers that the truth and reality of the Nigerian workers' lifeworld can be understood by examining the workers' perceptions of their lived experience of certain social phenomena (e.g. societal norms and workplace structures) (Cardinal *et al.*, 2004; Bryman, 2012). This in turn will inform why and how workers perceive the SHRM models in Nigerian organisations as either foreign, indigenous or a hybrid (Anakwe, 2002). In addition, the nature of the SHRM model in Nigeria will be determined by the workers' perceptions, opinions, thoughts, experiences, feelings and views, which are subjective (Cardinal *et al.*, 2004; Sandberg, 2005; Creswell, 2007; Bryman 2012). The implication of the subjective knowledge is that there is no one 'true knowledge' of the nature of SHRM in Nigeria, but different accounts of events as it affects individual workers (Cardinal *et al.*, 2004).

Furthermore, the phenomenological perspective of this thesis focuses on historical meanings of lived experiences of humans and their progressive and snowballing effects on individual and social levels in the lifeworld (Lavery, 2003). Consequently, when

examining knowledge about a facet of reality, each research approach makes specific assumptions about the nature of reality under inquiry (ontology) and about the nature of knowledge (epistemology) (Sandberg, 2005; Creswell, 2007). The ontological considerations in this sub-section have engaged with what constitutes knowledge, truth and social reality under phenomenology. The key point of the ontological consideration discussion is that knowledge, truth and social reality is intersubjective and is based on the human perceptions of their lived experiences of their lifeworld (Creswell, 2007; Finlay, 2009; Bryman, 2012). However, there is a need to understand further how knowledge, truth and social reality can be objectively understood (Sandberg, 2005). More specifically, due to the subjective nature of knowledge, truth and social reality, there is a requirement to understand what constitutes acceptable knowledge (Creswell, 2007; Bryman, 2012). To address the question of what constitutes acceptable knowledge, a further sub-section is needed to engage with epistemological consideration under phenomenology. The arguments will be presented in the sub-section below.

5.3.2 Epistemological Considerations

The aim of this sub-section is to address the question of what constitutes acceptable knowledge under a phenomenology paradigm (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, this sub-section will provide a methodological orientation for the research strategy which will guide the fieldwork of this research. According to Bryman and Bell (2003), epistemology addresses the question of what is (or should be) considered suitable knowledge in a discipline and how we gain or obtain said knowledge. Husserl (1952) drew attention to the relationship between the researcher and the object of study and in particular, how the researcher should avoid prejudices in his or her grasp of the social world. Researchers that are concerned with exploring lived experiences and culturally-bound meaning of human interactions (e.g. Sandberg, 2005; Hammersley, 2011; Fendt *et al.*, 2014) argued that a focus on the individuals who are responsible for their actions should be a critical part of research. Moreover, socio-cultural approaches to research inquiry require deeply contextualised understandings of social phenomena within the lifeworld (Lavery, 2003).

From a phenomenological perspective, the notion of the human consciousness as being intentional suggests that the lifeworld is the basis of human agency and activities (Sandberg, 2005). The intentionality implies that humans' consciousness is not closed, but open and always directed towards something other than itself (*ibid.*). Husserl (1952) argued that a human's numerous states of consciousness (such as perception, imagination,

thoughts, opinion or contemplation) are always focussed on something else other than consciousness itself, but intentionally constitute a certain act of consciousness. For example, in perception, a phenomenon is perceived; in imagination, a phenomenon is imagined, in thoughts, something is thought about (Husserl, 1952). The intentional consciousness phenomenological argument has epistemological implications for an interpretive research tradition (Sandberg, 2005). One of the epistemological implications is how individuals use their agency to achieve meaning and knowledge about the reality of their lifeworld (Sandberg, 2005; Finlay, 2009). Other epistemological implications considered by Sandberg (2005) are about how knowledge is constituted and the conditions under which the knowledge achieved can be claimed to be true. Thus, the researchers' agency plays an active role in social inquiry and in the process of constructing subjective accounts of the lifeworld generated by the research (Hammersley, 2011). Consequently, the researchers' accounts of the lifeworld may reflect their own views in many ways rather than some independent reality (*ibid.*).

In addition, an epistemological perspective of phenomenology is interpretivist, that is, the research method is based on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the participants' agency, perceptions and shared meanings (Bryman and Bell, 2003; Chenail, 2011; Bryman, 2012). Another epistemological contemplation of importance is the importance of understanding African-thought processes and the effect on organisational practices (Kamoche, 1997). African writers (e.g. Ahiauzu, 1986; Nzalibe, 1986; Anakwe, 2002; Smith, 2009) argued that African workers draw from their local traditional practices and manages their life in a system of shared communal relationships where the family is the core unit. Hence, the Nigerian workers' perceptions of social reality, knowledge and truth are influenced by their thought processes which are in turn shaped by their societal structures and cultures (Khan and Ackers, 2004). The process of making meaning and forming perceptions of reality is the very essence of phenomenology (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). Therefore intentions, agency, and actions are intersubjective and relative as there are numerous structures and socio-cultural influences that promote, limit, license, discipline, and sustain the lived experiences of workers under the SHRM model (Husserl, 1991; Berggren, 2014; Gill, 2014; Adil, 2015). The bridging of knowledge gaps in the scholarly inquiry of assumptions and professed understandings of ontology, epistemology, and methodology remains a challenge in applying the SHRM model in Africa (Anakwe, 2002; Kamoche, 2011; Abubakara *et al.*, 2014; Jackson *et al.*,

2014). It is worth noting that there are limited available phenomenological studies on Nigerian workers' agency and perceptions of their lived experiences within the structures and cultures of the lifeworld (Adeleye, 2011; Abubakara *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, this thesis closes the knowledge gap and contributes to the existing stock of knowledge on the SHRM model in Africa. However, there are limitations that need to be considered which are associated with the proposed methodology. To address these limitations, the next sub-section will discuss the methodological limitations.

5.3.3 Methodological Limitations

This sub-section discusses the limitations of using a phenomenology paradigm as a methodological framework. The focus of a phenomenological research is the underlying meaning behind peoples' perceptions of social phenomena rather than validity through numbers, thus the qualitative data is likely to be more labour-intensive and expensive to gather compared to quantitative data (Bryman, 2012). Moreover, the subjective nature of the qualitative data gathered results in difficulties in establishing the reliability of approaches and information, thus making the replicability of an outcome very difficult (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Bryman, 2012). In other words, a qualitative phenomenological study is inevitably subjective as no two researchers working with the same set of data are likely to come up with the same exact conclusion (Chenail, 2011). Besides, phenomenological research outcomes and conclusions depend on the participants chosen for a study (Bryman, 2012). The research method depends on the coherent skills of participants who provide the information on their lived experience of specific phenomena (Bryman, 2012). For example, in focussing on rich descriptions of lived experience, participants may miss information about what led up to that experience (Chenail, 2011; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). Another limitation of phenomenology as a research methodology is that not all of the individuals or potential participants are willing or able to participate due to intensive time requirements (Chenail, 2011). Thus, phenomenological research requires commitment, plenty of time, and the articulate skills of potential participants who have had the lived experiences of the phenomena being studied (Bryman, 2012).

Phenomenological research has been criticised for not providing guidelines on how to incorporate reflexivity and the researchers' knowledge into the research process (Willig, 2001). As a result, it is difficult to detect or to prevent researcher-induced bias (*ibid.*). As argued in Chapter Two, some phenomenologists (e.g. Heidegger, 1962; Van Manen,

2007; Finlay, 2009) argued that ensuring ‘pure bracketing’ may be difficult as this can lead to interference in the interpretation of the data. However, it is important to be aware that phenomenology acknowledges the importance of a researcher’s perspective, especially in the interpretative phenomenology traditions (Smith *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, sample sizes in phenomenological research are usually small, hence it is difficult to conclude that the experiences gathered are typical (Bryman, 2012). The findings also offer only a momentary snapshot of the perceptions of a few participants within specific social structures and cultural contexts on specific days (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). Thus, phenomenological research does not typically produce generalisable data, therefore making the research findings difficult to present in a manner that is usable by practitioners (*ibid.*). As a result, it is therefore imperative to present the research methods because the research methods are influenced by the phenomenological framework as well as the type of data to be gathered (Finlay, 2009). The next section will discuss details of proposed the research methods.

5.4 Research Methods

The aim of this section is to discuss the research methods that are consistent with the phenomenological framework and qualitative approach as well as to ensure that the ‘right’ type of data is gathered. It is important to discuss the research methods because there are many options available to social researchers with varying degree of outcome (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, it is important to carefully design the research method in order to achieve consistency between the theoretical frameworks and the methodology (*ibid.*). To achieve the aim of the section, the sampling design and size, data collection, interview processes, data analysis, reliability and validity of the research are discussed. The next sub-section will discuss the research design as it is important for the sampling process and population to reflect and recruit individuals who have the lived experience of a particular phenomenon.

5.4.1 Sampling Design and Sampling Size

The aim of this sub-section is to discuss the research method as it relates to the sampling approach, sample types and sampling population. Research sampling is the study of a subgroup of the population which characterises the whole population (Creswell, 2007). It is essential to discuss the research sampling design because there are a plethora of research sampling methods available to researchers (Groenewal, 2004; Creswell, 2007; Bryman, 2012). However, all of the various research sampling approaches can be broadly

divided into probability (random) sampling and purposive (non-probability) sampling (Groenewal, 2004; Bryman, 2012; Englander, 2012). Probability or random sampling is a research sampling method in which every member of the population has a chance of being selected for sampling and it involves random selection (Creswell, 2007; Bryman, 2012). However, in the purposive or non-probability sampling method, some members of the population have no chance of selection or the likelihood of their selection cannot be precisely determined (Chenail, 2011; Hammersley, 2011; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). Purposive sampling is a type of sampling which is framed around selection units (e.g. people, organisations, phenomenon, lived experiences etc.) which is usually informed by the research questions being asked (Bryman, 2012). Both probability and purposive sampling can be applied to qualitative researches, but two key criteria might be envisaged when determining which sampling approach is appropriate (*ibid.*). The first criterion is the importance or relevance of generalisation in the study to the wider population (Bryman, 2012). If there is a compelling need to infer generalisation to the wider population from the study, then the preference sampling approach may suggest probability sampling (*ibid.*). The second criterion is when the research questions suggest that a particular category of people or phenomenon should be sampled. Here, purposive sampling is preferred (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012; Bryman, 2012). The idea underpinning purposive sampling is that the research questions should suggest what phenomenon needs to be sampled (Bryman, 2012). Thus, purposive sampling is suitable in circumstances where the social researchers need to reach a specific sample population quickly and where sampling for proportionality is not the crucial concern (Chenail, 2011; Hammersley, 2011).

According to Starks and Trinidad (2007), qualitative research approaches entails the use of purposive sampling methods to recruit participants who have a lived experience of the particular phenomena under study. The phenomena or the lived experiences under inquiry are the units of analysis, thus, large sample sizes are not important to generate rich data sets given that each participant generates deep insight of the phenomena (*ibid.*). Phenomenology studies are interested in the shared structures of the lived experience, therefore a large sampling size is not required (*ibid.*). As a result, a phenomenological perspective as well as the research questions suggests that a large population sample is not important as long as the participants meet certain criteria (Bryman, 2012). Consequently, it can be argued that the type of purposive sampling approach is ‘criterion sampling’

(Bryman, 2012). According to Bryman (*ibid.*), criterion sampling is a type of purposive sampling in which all of the units (phenomena or individuals) that meet the specific characteristics are studied. Furthermore, from a phenomenological perspective, it is not essential to study all of the people within an available population sample that meets the set criteria (Starks and Trinidad, 2007). This is because the data from only a few participants who have a lived experience of the phenomena and who can give a detailed account of their perceptions of their lived experience may be sufficient to uncover its core features (Starks and Trinidad, 2007; Finlay, 2009). Thus, with a sampling population identified and selected, there is a requirement to discuss how the data will be collected from the participants. It is important to discuss the data collection process because it is influenced by the phenomenological stance, research questions and the type of data to be collected. This has been considered next.

5.4.2 Data Collection Method

Discussing and choosing the most appropriate data collection method will ensure that the lived experiences of the selected participants are fully investigated. According to Aspers (2009), phenomenology is characterised by how the researchers approach the fieldwork with considerations for any practical implications. It is said that phenomenological researchers ought to explore the social structures and cultural factors of the lifeworld in a less predetermined way, reflecting the participants' perceptions rather than the researchers' own view (Giorgi, 1997; Aspers, 2009). Explanations should therefore account for the participants' views of their lived experience of a phenomenon in their lifeworld (Giorgi, 1997; Aspers, 2009; Finlay, 2009). Accordingly, the data collection process employed by a researcher should preserve both the participants' perspectives and the role of the theory involved (Aspers, 2009). Englander (2012) posited that the phenomenon being studied is the object of investigation and not the person, although, a person is needed to describe the phenomenon. As a result, the research data gathering process is an occasion to become conversant with the phenomenon through the participants' descriptions (*ibid.*).

Data collection processes in phenomenological studies can involve a combination of observation, interviews, and close reading of existing literature (Starks and Trinidad, 2007; Finlay, 2009). Through observation, social researchers can collect data about how participants use their agency to make meaning of their lived experiences in the social structures and cultural factors of their lifeworld (Starks and Trinidad, 2007).

Phenomenological researchers can also use observation techniques to understand how participants live in their lifeworld, through time and space, to provide explanations on how they might embody meaning (Apsers, 2009). However, a phenomenological study cannot use observations alone, but it must at least combine this with informal discussions and interviews with the participants (Apsers, 2009). The implication is that phenomenological research should involve verbal interactions with those studied in the field for which interviews are suitable (Schutz, 1982; Husserl, 1997; Giorgi, 1997; Apsers, 2009; Englander, 2012). Observations can be a good source of lived experience data; however, it is usually not feasible in SHRM studies because of the likelihood of intrusiveness and logistical difficulty (Starks and Trinidad, 2007). Therefore, qualitative research often depends on interviews as the main data collection option, due to their focus on the meaning of a phenomenon as it is experienced by the participants (Starks and Trinidad, 2007; Englander, 2012).

Bryman (2012) identified the three main types of qualitative research interviews (e.g. structured, semi-structured and unstructured). Structured interviews are interviews administered using a list of fixed standard questions with limited variation which are designed to test *a priori* hypotheses and are relatively quick and easy to administer, and may be of particular use if there is a need for quantitative analyses (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006; Bryman, 2012). By its very nature, structured interviews allow for limited participant responses and are, therefore, of little use in phenomenological inquiries as they are not suitable for exploring meanings and perceptions of phenomena in a lifeworld (Giorgi, 2008; Finlay, 2009; Bryman, 2012). On the contrary, an unstructured interview technique is a data collection approach to gathering human behaviour without imposing any preconceived hypotheses about a specific phenomenon which might limit the field of inquiry (Starks and Trinidad, 2007; Englander 2012). Unstructured interviews also rely exclusively on the impromptu generation of questions in the normal course of research interactions because pre-determined questions are not used, however, this does not suggest that they are random and directionless (Apsers, 2009; Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, unstructured interviews are generally very laborious and often difficult to manage as there are no predefined interview questions to guide the interview conversation. As such, they cannot be used without thorough knowledge and preparation, if the researcher hopes to achieve a deep understanding into people's lived experiences (Apsers, 2009). Moreover, DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) posited that unstructured

interviews are usually used in combination with other data collection methods, such as observations while semi-structured interviews are often used as the main data source for qualitative research.

In phenomenology, semi-structured interviews allow for the researcher to explore people's realities from their own perspectives using a set of scheduled open-ended questions with other questions emerging from the conversation between the researcher and the participants (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). Semi-structured in-depth interviews are the most commonly used interviewing format for qualitative research, which allows the researcher to inquire deeply into the social and personal matters of participants (*ibid.*). As such, semi-structured interviews are commonly used to co-create meanings with the participants by reconstructing their perceptions of phenomena and lived experiences related to the lifeworld (Finlay, 2009). Moreover, semi-structured interviews have been the main data collection in phenomenological studies previously (Kafle, 2011; Englander, 2012; Fendt *et al.*, 2014). The most common ways that semi-structured interviews are conducted are either through face-to-face or telephone interviews (Creswell, 2007; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). Face-to-face interviews have long been the main interview technique in the field of phenomenology research, but in the last two decades, telephone interviewing has become more common (Aspers, 2009; Bryman, 2012). According to Kvale (1983), collecting the participants' descriptions of their lifeworld or lived experiences can be done in numerous ways of which face-to-face and telephone interviews are the most common. However, due to developments in computer technology, other interview techniques (e.g. Skype, FaceTime, video conferencing, email chat etc.) can be introduced and used within the field of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007; 2011; Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, telephone interviews offer some advantages over face-to-face interviews, such as reduced cost; easier access to geographically dispersed participants; increased researcher safety; and the ability to take notes discreetly (Kvale, 1983). Telephone interviews also ensure more anonymity and privacy, less social pressure, and increase the rapport between the researchers and the participants (*ibid.*). Some scholars (e.g. Kvale, 1983; Opdenakker, 2006; Appelrouth and Edles, 2012) argued that there is little evidence to support the suggestion that face-to-face interviews are more advantageous than telephone interviews. Thus, the semi-structured telephone interview method has been used to gather the skilled Nigerian bank workers' perceptions of their lived experiences.

The discussion of the data collection method above has identified the semi-structured interviews as the ideal data gathering approach for this present study. Therefore, there is a need to discuss how the study's interview process will be used to explore the participants' perspectives. However, before then, the next section will discuss the preliminary interviews and visits to Nigerian banks.

5.4.3 Visit to Nigerian Banks and preliminary Interviews

Prior to the commencement of the interview process, the researcher visited three Nigerian banks and had informal face-to-face interviews with ten Nigerian bank workers in Lagos. The Nigerian workers informally interviewed formed the core of the participants and thus, this implies that the majority of the participants are from Lagos. During the visit to the three Nigerian banks, the researcher understood the constraints of gaining access to the banks and the workers. One of the access constraints was that the workers could not grant an interview while at work, hence the interview would have to be done outside office hours which is usually late at night or weekends when they are not working. Another constraint is that the workers informed the researcher that the most reliable means of communication is through the telephone. Most workers complained that video calling (Facetime, Skype) depletes their data plan, and that it is expensive and unreliable due to network issues. However, the researcher was able to build up a list of respondents who were willing to Facetime or Skype. During the visits to the Nigerian banks, the researcher started the interview processes and the preliminary interviews helped to shape the interview process.

Furthermore, Sweet (2002) addressed the question: Is the telephone interview compatible with interpretive phenomenological research? Sweet (2002, pp 58) stated that '*...qualitative researchers should not rely exclusively on the face-to-face interview, as the telephone interview can be an equally valuable data collection approach*'. De Gagne and Walters (2010) equally used telephone interviews to gather their findings on online educators' lived experience using a hermeneutic interpretative phenomenology paradigm. De Gagne and Walters's (2010) telephone interviews varied in length with the average being one hour. In addition, Knox and Burkard (2009) argued that telephone interviews are quite common in qualitative phenomenological researches because it enables the researchers to include participants from a broad geographic representation with the same method. Knox and Burkard (2009) also argued that telephone interviews ensure the anonymity of participants while providing freedom to take notes at will. Having discussed

the preparatory work, the next section will present the interview process adopted in this present study.

5.4.4 The Interview Process

The aim of this sub-section is to discuss the interview process that was adopted in this study. This sub-section will achieve its aims by discussing how the phenomenological semi-structured interview approach was used to gather data based on the Nigerian bank workers' perceptions of their lived experience. Foremost, the study participants had to meet all of the following requirements to be included in the interview process:

- i. Be an employee in a Nigerian bank;
- ii. Be skilled (i.e. an employee with at least a first degree from a university or a polytechnic);
- iii. Be of middle or line management (i.e. an employee that is subordinate to the executive management and responsible for other employees);
- iv. Have a workplace lived experience under the HRM and the SHRM models in Nigerian banks;
- v. Have a lived experience of the wider Nigerian social structures and cultural contexts.

The above listed criteria formed the base for recruiting participants from the twenty-three commercial banks in Nigeria. To assist the researcher in the fieldwork, the researcher prepared an interview schedule around the participants' key lived experiences (e.g. HRM, SHRM, work-lifeworld balance, socio-cultural factors) for discussions (Appendix 3). The interview schedule was designed around the research questions that yielded as much information about the studied phenomenon as possible. The open-ended question format in the interview schedule stimulated in-depth participant responses and also encouraged the conversation to proceed in a natural manner, producing rich, genuine and realistic insights into the participants' lived experiences. The interview schedule had fifteen open-ended questions with related prompts to encourage further conversation.

Once, the interview schedules were prepared, the researcher used telephone, Skype and FaceTime interview tools to contact and collect the skilled Nigerian bank workers' perceptions of their lived experience under the HRM and the SHRM models, some of

whom are based in different states in the country. However, due to poor internet connection and expensive data in Nigeria, it was not always possible to complete the interview via Skype or FaceTime. Thus, telephone became the most frequently used means of interviewing. Furthermore, an official letter from Heriot-Watt's University detailing the scope of the research was presented to the banks in Nigeria seeking permission to interview their employees. As the interviews progressed, more participants were recruited using networks of friends and former colleagues of the researcher. Each interview was scheduled to last one hour, which was considered to be a suitable duration for a phenomenological semi-structured interview (Giorgi, 1997; Englander, 2012). At the beginning of each interview, the researcher introduced the topic and aim of the study. Each interview was then recorded using Olympus digital voice recorder. The prior consent of participants to record the interviews was obtained in all cases. In addition to the audio recording, hand notes were taken to note prompts for issues, concerns, emerging themes and questions to return to later in the interview.

In order to test and familiarise the researcher with the selected method of data collection, the first three interviews conducted represented a pilot study for the research project. The pilot study allowed the researcher to test the interview questions, average interview time, and to generate more themes and to observe patterns around the studied phenomena and participants' lived experiences. After the pilot interviews, the participants shared their experience of the interview and participants' suggestions informed approaches to the interviews that followed. In total, fifty-three interviews (including the three pilot interviews) were conducted with employees of Nigerian banks. There are twenty-three banks in Nigeria, out of which three are international (foreign) owned banks. Throughout the interview process, the researcher was mindful to reflect on the process in order to ensure the consistency and suitability of the questions and approach in general. The researcher ensured that the participants felt at ease by reiterating at every possible opportunity that there are no right or wrong answers. Participants were also given enough time to answer interview questions without interrupting. More so, the researcher ensured that the interview process was a two-way conversation as participants were encouraged to ask the researcher questions to clarify their understanding of the research questions where needed. After each interview process, the researcher thanked the participants for their help and asked for feedback about the topics discussed, and the interview process. All of the

emergent issues, topics and suggestions formed part of the total data collected for analysis.

Once the data was collected, it needed to be analysed and interpreted while preserving the participants' perceptions of their lived experiences under the HRM and SHRM models, and in the socio-cultural lifeworld. Hence, to discuss further the data analysis, sub-section 5.4.4 presents how the data was analysed and interpreted.

5.4.5 The Research's Data Analyses and Interpretation

This sub-section discusses how the data collected was analysed and interpreted. It is important to analyse the data collected in this study in order to bring order, structure and understanding to the data collected (Bryman and Bell, 2003; Bryman, 2012). Moreover, interpreting the data ensures that the researcher has brought meaning and deep insight to the words and agency of the participants in the study. This phenomenological qualitative research involved the simultaneous gathering and analysing of data whereby both mutually shape one another. That is, as the data was analysed, themes emerged which informed me whether a further interview will explore the identified themes. The iterative approach to data collection and analysis has led to a point where no new themes or issues emerged; this indicated a chance to end the data collection process. Good sound quality was also important when recording interviews, as it is not only what participants said, but how the participants said it. Thus, all interviews were digitally recorded, downloaded onto a computer and then transcribed using Dragon NaturallySpeaking 1.1 software.

Thereafter, each interview was labelled, for example 'Name A, X, XX 2013' to ensure the anonymity of participants. A selected number of transcribed interview scripts were then presented to the participants to verify their accuracy and authenticity. While it is acknowledged that there are other valid qualitative data analysis techniques, Smith's (2004) interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), focusing on participants' perceptions of their lived experiences, makes it an ideal data analysis approach for this study. Smith's (2004) IPA provided a structured approach to analysing and interpreting interview transcripts. An IPA approach implied that there cannot be a predetermined structure to the interpretive process, because interpretation arises from pre-understanding and a dialectical movement in interview dialogue (Van Manen, 2007). Thus, an IPA approach recognises the central role that researchers play, thus reflexivity is important (Smith, 2004). Based on the IPA approach, the aim was to understand the meaning that

participants attached to a phenomenon or lived experience, rather than measuring their frequency (Smith, 2004). As a result, in order to understand the meaning attached to the participants' experience, it was important to learn about the socio-cultural lifeworld as well as the intersubjectivity of individuals that inform the study of the shared meaning (Smith, 2004; Van Manen 2007). Therefore, following the transcription of the interview audio recordings, the researcher analysed the data based on Smith's (2004) IPA iterative steps as detailed in Table 5.4 below.

Step	Description of Activities	The Researcher's Approach
1	First identify themes	<p>The researcher read the transcripts a number of times to identify any emergent themes. Some key emergent themes identified are listed below:</p> <p>Social/societal issues, cultural issues, traditions, SHRM model.</p> <p>Thereafter, there was a need to order and structure the themes so as to make meaning of them.</p>
2	Connect the themes (clustering of themes)	<p>After identifying the emergent themes, the researcher started analysing and looking for theoretical links which addressed the research questions. Some themes emerged as closely aligned forming clusters while others were less so. The preliminary list of themes that emerged were clustered as illustrated below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Influencing social structures</i>: regulations, political, religious and economic factors; • <i>Cultural factors</i>: traditional institutions, traditional titles; • <i>Work-life balance issues</i>: lived experiences,

		<p>economic situation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Workplace practices</i>: group orientation, social exclusions; • <i>Agency of workers</i>: managerial style, training; • <i>HRM policies and practices</i>: convergence, divergence, cross-vergence and trans-vergence; • <i>SHRM policies and practices</i>: best practices, best fit. <p>The researcher checked the transcripts to ensure that the actual words of the participants were preserved as the emerging themes were clustered. The clustering process was also iterative, and the emerging clustered themes were used in the subsequent interview process to gain an in-depth insight and understanding into the participants' lived experiences and lifeworld.</p>
3	Tabulate themes in a summary table	<p>Once the themes had been clustered, the researcher then arranged the themes so that they addressed the research questions. The clustered themes represented the superordinate themes under which the clustered themes were discussed. The researcher made sure that the verbatim transcripts were represented in the themes.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Perceptions of divergent socio-cultural norms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Influencing social structures ✓ Cultural factors ✓ Work-life balance issues 2) Workers' agency and perceptions of their lived experiences affected <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Workplace practices

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Agency of workers <p>3) Perceptions of HRM practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Convergence views ✓ Divergence views ✓ Cross-vergence views ✓ Trans –vergence views <p>4) SHRM model provisions in Nigerian banks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Best practice experiences ✓ Best fit experiences
4	Continuing the analyses with other cases	The three pilot interviews together with the themes identified in the literature review generated the key themes and shaped the cluster themes. Thereafter, subsequent interviews explored the themes further while acknowledging any emerging issues.
5	Write up	Once the iterative IPA steps have been concluded, the researcher started outlining the meanings inherent in the participants' lived experience. This stage allowed the researcher to translate the themes into the narrative accounts of the participants.

Table 5.4: Overview of the data analyses and interpretation processes based on Smith's (2004) IPA model

Table 5.4 illustrates how the researcher used Smith's (2004) IPA iterative steps to analyse and interpret the interview transcripts and notes taken during the interview process. During the data analysis, the researcher used reflective notes to record aspects of the interview and personal reflections (Schurink, 2003; Creswell, 2007; Chenail, 2011). Thus, the reflective notes contributed to the reliability and validity of the research (Smith, 2004; Bryman, 2012). According to Smith *et al.* (2009), the most prominent criteria for assessing a social research study, and in particular IPA, are reliability and validity. Hence,

a discussion is necessary on the issues surrounding reliability and validity in a phenomenological study and this has been presented next.

5.4.6 Reliability and Validity Issues in IPA Research Methods

The aim of this sub-section is to discuss the issues of reliability and validity in a social inquiry because reliability focuses on the question of whether the results of a research are repeatable or replicable, and validity addresses the question of the integrity of the conclusions drawn from a study (Bryman, 2012). The aim of this sub-section will be achieved by engaging with existing studies that have addressed similar issues of reliability and validity in social research. The concepts of reliability and validity have their basis in positivist quantitative traditions; hence there is a need for re-definition within a qualitative phenomenological paradigm (Golafshani, 2003; Creswell, 2007; Bryman, 2012). Golafshani (2003) contended that in qualitative research, redefining the term reliability and validity means adopting a different terminology such as trustworthiness and authenticity as the researcher is interpretively involved, rather than trying to objectively enquire about a phenomenon. Furthermore, applying quantitative reliability and validity standards to qualitative phenomenological research assumes that a single absolute account of social reality is feasible which is in conflict with the IPA approach (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Golafshani, 2003; Bryman, 2012).

In the case of applying an IPA study, a researcher seeks to interpret participants' perceptions of a specific phenomenon or a lived experience (Van Manen, 2007; Finlay, 2009). Thus, the researcher's and participants' role and agency in interpreting social reality are subjective and therefore, the interpretations need to be well-evidenced and grounded in raw data through consistent data collection, transcription, analysis and interpretation (Smith *et al.*, 2009). However, the extent to which the IPA process addresses reliability and validity is contentious given the subjective nature of the data and the level of interaction between a researcher and the text (Appelrouth and Edles, 2011; Hammersley, 2011; Bryman, 2012). Some scholars (e.g. Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Yardley, 2000; Smith *et al.*, 2009) argued that the purpose of an IPA study is to produce one of many possible interpretations of a phenomenon, thus reliability may be an inappropriate criterion to measure qualitative studies. In the same vein, IPA views the role of the researcher as interactive and dynamic (Yardley, 2000). Therefore, the essence of a validity check is not to produce a singular truth of the accounts of the data, but to ensure the credibility of the themes generated (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Yardley, 2000). As a

consequence, the concept of validity within IPA studies is not fixed, but it is dependent on how the research process develops (Golafshani, 2003). The issue of reliability and validity was taken seriously in this study. The researcher ensured that the themes generated represented the views expressed by the participants in the study. The researcher did not strive to establish a single account of truth, but to establish a first-hand subjective account of the workers' lived experiences under the HRM and the SHRM models.

Some scholars (e.g. Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Yardley, 2000; Golafshani, 2003) contended that the validity of IPA research should be considered in terms of the applicability of the illustrated themes to similar situations. However, most IPA studies do not strive to attain a representative sample in terms of either the population or probability (Smith *et al.*, 2009; Bryman, 2012). Smith (2004) posited that IPA studies are usually conducted on relatively small sample sizes which are sufficient for the potential of IPA to be realised. Thus, the issue of reliability and validity should be taken seriously by a qualitative researcher (*ibid.*). To measure reliability and validity in an IPA study, Hammersley (2011) proposed using self-description and reflective note-keeping; participant validation; prolonged involvement; persistent observation; and peer debriefing. Therefore, reflexivity is important in this research as it is an essential part of qualitative IPA research (Bryman, 2012). Reflexivity is when a researcher reflects on his/her own beliefs and values in the same manner as they examine those of their respondents (Golafshani, 2003; Smith, 2011). Furthermore, a researcher's beliefs and values should be made explicit and taken in to account when conducting research on people's lived experiences (Van Manen, 2007; Finlay, 2009; Smith, 2011). Thus, the next section will present the researcher's reflexivity and reflections in this study.

5.5 Researcher's Reflexivity

The purpose of this section is to discuss the researcher's role and agency in this phenomenological social inquiry. This section will achieve its purpose by engaging with the literature on phenomenological reflexivity and reflections on the researcher's role in the inquiry process. According to Bryman (2012), reflexivity is used to describe the implication of a researcher's methods, values, biases, decisions and presence in a social inquiry. From a theoretical dimension, reflexivity reflects on the agency and culture of the researcher in recognising the forces of socialisation and in altering their place in the social structures (Appelrouth and Edles, 2012). Reflexivity also considers the capacity of the agency of the researcher in constructing the study's outcomes within an African social

structure and cultural context (*ibid.*). From a phenomenological perspective, a researcher is faced with a dialectic movement between bracketing pre-understandings and taking advantage of them reflexively as a source of perception and agency within the structure and culture of the inquiry process (Finlay, 2009). As argued in Chapter Two, these two contending views of reflexivity form an important dichotomy between the descriptive and interpretative phenomenological schools of thoughts (Giorgi, 1997; Van Manen, 2007; Finlay, 2009). The view taken in this research is that it is not possible to completely bracket-out any pre-understanding of the structures and cultures of the lifeworld; hence researchers should ensure that any pre-understandings or biases do not reconstruct the participants' narrative accounts (Heidegger, 1962; Van Manen, 2007). Finlay (2009) argued that the challenge for phenomenological researchers is to concurrently manage opposing attitudes of being removed from (bracket) to being 'open to' while also interacting with the participants in the social world.

Finlay (2009) suggested that one way of avoiding the dilemma of reflexivity is for phenomenological researchers to embrace intersubjective relationships with participants. The discussions above have highlighted the importance of the researcher's agency and role in co-creating reality in a social inquiry (Bryman 2012). However, there is a need to discuss the researcher's background because the researcher was confronted with his own lived experiences during this study, particularly with certain dilemmas over the analysis of data where the researcher could relate to his own lived experience of the phenomena being studied. As the researcher is from the same social structure and cultural setting as the social inquiry context, it is important to point out that the researcher's role is influenced by the researcher's lived experience. Hence, there is a requirement to discuss the researcher's background and this is presented in the next sub-section.

5.5.1 Researcher's Background Reflections

The key aim of this sub-section is to present the researcher's background and its assumed impact on the research process. Reflecting on the researcher's background is important because the researcher's background can be viewed as a socio-cultural construct that embodies structural meanings based on lived experiences through socialisation with family, in school and in the workplace (Hofstede, 1980; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Kamoche, 2011). From a phenomenological perspective, social reality is subjective and constituted in and of the moment as it is lived by a social researcher (Shaw, 2010). The relationship between the participants' lived experiences of specific phenomena and a

researcher is closely interconnected (*ibid.*). Thus, the personal motivation and work experiences of a researcher needs special consideration in order to understand his/her relationship to the study. It is possible for two different researchers to conduct a social inquiry from different perspectives and with a different approach, and both research outcomes will be an equally valid understanding of a particular phenomenon (Bryman, 2012). It is therefore important to understand how the researcher's motivation, background, participation and considerations have influenced the construction of reality (Berggren, 2014; Budd and Velasquez, 2014). For that reason, the background information on the researcher's motivation, social life and work experiences as a former bank worker and HR scholar is presented in the subsequent paragraphs.

The researcher was born in Nigeria and worked for two different Nigerian banks in the country from 1999 to 2005. Consequently, the researcher is familiar with the culture and the expected professional values in the Nigerian banking industry. However, since 2005, there has been consolidation in the banks, corporate governance and in the regulatory controls of senior management appointments and activities. As is the case with some participants in this current study, the researcher also has academic degrees (BSc, MBA) from a Nigerian university and an MSc from a UK University. The point here is that the researcher is native to the 'two worlds' i.e. the structural and cultural worlds of organisations and wider society in Nigeria. One could argue that some of these attributes made access to the research participants easier and possibly made the participants talk more freely as the researcher is perceived to be an 'insider'. However, some participants assumed that the researcher was collating data for senior managers in order to improve administrative processes in their banks. The researcher re-assured participants that all of the data collected was only for a PhD thesis and possible academic publications. As a result, in this study, the researcher's background and position in the social inquiry process was not suspended (bracketed) as suggested by Husserl (1997). For example, during the interview process, the researcher did not mention his banking background, but certain structural and cultural features such as the researcher's name, accent and physical appearance could not be hidden from interviewees. The researcher found that using personal notes was helpful in reflecting on any themes or concerns, especially in areas that needed to be revisited for clarity. The researcher also kept a diary of what the inquiry process may look like based on similar existing studies. The diary was also used for documenting the researcher's assumptions and understanding of the lived experiences of

the Nigerian workers. During the interview process, the researcher focussed on the participants' responses without relating what they said to his personal lived experience. By the same token, during the data analysis and interpretation stages, the existing IPA framework was used to draw conclusions. Overall, the researcher's perceptions and understanding of the Nigerian workers' lived experience changed over time. The research 'opened' the researcher's eyes to new understandings of the social phenomena around the Nigerian workers' lived experiences under the SHRM model within their structural and cultural lifeworld. To illustrate, the researcher did not feel that calling colleagues by their first name was a problem when he was working in the Nigerian banking sector. However, reflecting on this problem, the researcher can understand the argument for and against, and the social position of the problem within the Nigerian social structure and culture.

As mentioned above, the researcher and participants' backgrounds are similar in that they both have/had lived experiences of the Nigerian banking industry and wider societal norms. However, the participants in this study offer a unique proposition in that they have more current lived experience of the Nigerian banking industry than the researcher. The researcher has not lived in Nigeria for the last ten years and a number of government policies have been introduced which influences the workers' workplace lived experiences. Thus, from a phenomenological perspective, the participants were able to share their more recent intersubjective perceptions of their workplace lived experiences. In addition, the research participants provided a knowledge repository on how they use their agency to construct and navigate the structures and cultures within their lifeworld through perceptions of their lived experiences. To be able to tap into this knowledge repository, there is a need for discussion on the demography of the skilled Nigerian bank workers, and this follows.

5.6 Research Participants' Demography

This section presents the profiles of the research participants. In a phenomenological inquiry, a researcher is not primarily concerned with knowing how many or how frequently participants have had a particular lived experience, although such information may be captured by the interview process itself (Giorgi, 1997). Thus, when it comes to choosing research participants, the researcher selected participants who have had a specific lived experience of the investigated phenomena (Giorgi, 1997). For example, the researcher chose individuals who work in the Nigerian banking industry and have lived

experiences of the wider society. Consequently, the research participants in this study represent a perspective rather than a population (Smith *et al.*, 2009).

The participants were interviewed for an average of one hour and all of the participants had responsibilities for managing direct reports and their job title ranged from Team Leader to Group Head of Department. In addition, most of the participants in this study were mostly based in Lagos. As middle management staff, the participants typically reported to the senior or executive leadership of their banks. Thus, participants represented the skilled Nigerian working class by having at least a first degree. Over fifty per cent had a Master's degree or more. Participants' age ranged from thirty to fifty years. The participants had an average of eleven years working in the Nigerian banking industry. Furthermore, most participants were married with children of school age and their tribal affiliations included the different geopolitical zones in Nigeria (see Appendix 2). All participants were Nigerian, but most had experience of Western cultures either through education, foreign training programs or holidays. Consequently, all of the participants had lived experiences of structural and cultural lifeworlds of 'foreign' organisation and societal contexts. Participants were therefore able to share their perceptions, thoughts, views, opinions and feelings on how they use their agency through intersubjective relationships to navigate the social structures and cultures in their lifeworlds. The interviewing process also involved an intersubjective relationship between the researcher and participants. Consequently, ethical considerations were required and this has been presented below.

5.7 Ethical Considerations of the Study

This section discusses some of the ethical issues around confidentiality and trust during the interviewing, data analysis and interpreting processes. Ethical norms are important in cross-cultural studies of this kind because, whilst people are aware of some shared ethical norms, people quite often interpret and apply these norms in different ways (Hofstede, 1991; Kamoche, 2011). The differences in the way people apply ethical norms is because of the differences in values and life experiences, which is in turn influenced by people's contextual socio-cultural lifeworld experiences (Emeti, 2012; Fendt *et al.*, 2014).

At the beginning of the interview process, the purpose of the research was explained to the research participants and their permissions were sought. The participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the interview at any point. Furthermore, to

ensure the confidentiality of participants and the Nigerian banks studied, the researcher used pseudonyms and removed any narratives or words that could be traced back to either the participants or to their organisations. The data analysis and interpretation was anonymous, and the researcher took special care to ensure that the exact words of the participants were preserved and used except with removal of any identifying features. The researcher ensured that the exact words of the participants were preserved by presenting a few transcribed interview scripts back to the participants to verify that it was an acceptable account of the interview (as explained in Section 5.4.4 above). Furthermore, the researcher was aware of the need to avoid any possible bias as a result of being a member of the group that was being studied. This issue was addressed under reflexivity and the researcher's background reflections in sections 5.5 and 5.5.1 respectively. The present research's fieldwork study was presented to and approved by Heriot-Watt University, and the School of Management and Languages' Research Ethics Committee. In summary, having discussed the research design and methodology, the chapter will provide a summary section of the key issues addressed in this chapter.

5.8 Summary

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss the research methodology, strategy and methods which will guide how data was collected in order to answer the research questions. A methodological framework was therefore required to guide the fieldwork in order to gather the participants' thoughts, views and opinions. This chapter achieved its aim by designing a research method which was consistent with the phenomenological and theoretical dimensions of this study using IPA guidelines. Purposive sampling and convenient selection approaches were used to recruit a pre-defined sampling population who have lived experiences of the Nigerian banking industry and wider societal lifeworld. Moreover, as with qualitative phenomenological studies of this nature, the role of the researcher as a co-creator of reality was addressed through reflexivity and reflections. The view taken in this thesis was that the IPA guideline provided a 'structured' approach to analysing and interpreting human's lived experiences. Due to the subjective nature of the data gathered, issues around limitations and ethics were considered.

Furthermore, through sequential ordering of Chapters One to Five, links have been established showing relationships between the literature, theoretical and methodological chapters. The phenomenological framework adopted ensured that there is consistency between the philosophical approach and the research method. Consequently, the next two

chapters, Chapters Six and Seven, will present the findings in this thesis, but due to the volume of the data gathered throughout the field work, it is not practical to present everything. Hence, the emerging and recurring themes, issues and concerns will be presented in line with the existing structures of the previous literature review chapters in this thesis. Also, during the fieldwork, it became apparent that the data needs to be presented in two chapters in line with the literature review chapters. Therefore, in keeping with the structure of the literature chapters, the empirical chapters will commence with the workers' perceptions of their lived experience under the HRM model in Chapter Six next. Chapter Seven will focus on the workers' lived experiences under the SHRM model in Nigeria.

CHAPTER SIX: WORKERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE HRM DEBATES: NIGERIAN WORKERS' 'LIVED EXPERIENCES'

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter and the next chapter is to present and analyse the fieldwork findings of this study in order to address the three research questions set out in Chapter One, Section 1.5. This is done as follows; Chapter Six presents and analyses data that will address research question number one, while Chapter Seven will present and analyse the findings that will address research questions number two and three. Research question one is restated for ease of reference: 'To what extent does the HRM model in Nigerian banks affect the skilled workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experiences?' Research question one will be addressed through the discussions in this chapter by relating the emerging themes from the participants' accounts with the identified research questions. Consequently, in this chapter, the focus is placed on how the broader convergent best practices and divergent socio-cultural norms affects the Nigerian skilled bank workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experiences and agency. In other words, we will seek to understand how organisational and contextual structures and cultural factors influence the agency of the participants and the HRM model in Nigeria.

In order to address research question one, Chapter Six starts with an overview of the HRM model in Nigerian in Section 6.2. Section 6.3 presents a detailed account of the participants' views on convergence versus divergence HRM debates and its effect on workers' experiences. Subsequently, Section 6.4 discusses in detail the participants' perceptions of cross-vergence versus trans-vergence HRM debates. Section 6.5 engages with the workers' perceptions of an African-inspired HRM model and Section 6.6 presents the workers' lived experiences of work-life conflict. Chapter Six concludes with a summary, while Section 6.7 reiterates the key findings.

6.2 Overview of Workers' Perceptions of the HRM Model in Nigeria

The aim of this section is to set the scene by introducing the key HRM debates discussed by the participants to gain an insight into the participants' views, thoughts, feelings, perceptions and lived experience of HRM policies and practices in Nigeria. This section also provides an overview of how participants use their agency to shape HRM policies and practices. The participants' views and perceptions represent a conscious and rational understanding of their lived experiences within organisational and national structures and

cultures. The participants' perceptions of the HRM model in Nigeria varied depending on how actively they used their agency to shape their HRM policies and practices. In other words, the extent to which participants seem to use their agency influences how they shape the HRM model, which consequently, influences their lived experiences. Some participants are of the opinion that there is a 'value shift', whereby banks and Nigerian society at large is embracing Western values and practices. 20 out of 53 of the participants argued that this value shift implies that HRM policies and practices in Africa and the workers' lived experiences converge with Western culture and contextual structures. Participants who shared the convergence view about the HRM model in Africa believed that in most cases, the African value systems are not documented in HRM policies in African organisations. The convergence view can be illustrated with the example below. Muye, a Business Transformation Team Lead in Entrepreneur Bank, argued that most HRM policies in the Nigerian banking industry are converging with Western HRM policies and practices. Muye contended that sometimes when socio-cultural issues arise that need to be addressed, such concerns are treated as 'exceptions' within the broader HRM policy provisions. Furthermore, Muye posited that the financial objective of Nigerian banks is the most important driver in formulating and implementing HRM policies.

"Depending on the policies, there are times that exceptions are included to take care of cultural differences" (Muye, Business Transformation Team Lead, Entrepreneur Bank, Lagos, Male, 42)

Muye's quote is a common view amongst a number of participants and from this viewpoint, the participants suggest that some organisations in Nigeria do not actively engage with indigenous socio-cultural factors. From the participants' view, socio-cultural issues, concerns and factors are treated as exceptions in HRM policies in some Nigerian banks. Moreover, the role of Western HRM practices is perceived by some participants to have a direct effect on an organisation's financial success. However, a few participants differed in opinion, arguing that the African value system is resilient and that it drives intersubjectivity and collective agency among African workers. Participants who argued that African values are resilient contended that contextual HRM practices predominate despite the influence of widespread Western policies. Ben's quote below summarises the argument above that African values are predominant and shapes workplace relationships.

“Our African values and ways of doing things drives everything.....how we relate with our managers, colleagues.....Even the banks benefit from recruiting from the cultural setting they operate in” (Ben, Customer Service Officer, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 34)

Ben’s quote illustrates a divergent view in Warranty Bank. Additionally, the participants who held the divergence view maintained that the workers’ workplace lived experiences reflect more of African socio-cultural norms. Many participants argued that divergence views and resilient African cultural values are reinforced by African thought systems. For example, some participants argued that what appear to be Western HRM practices are actually driven by African socio-cultural contexts and the organisations’ competition for market share. Workers interviewed who also shared these beliefs argued further that even if managers actively sought Western HRM practices, Africa’s unique environment will ensure that it is different. The divergence viewpoint is illustrated by Lapo’s quote below:

“When you talk about policy generally you have to put it into local context because we are in a unique community. For any policy to actually work; it must be placed and integrated into societal value system. So there is always local content” (Lapo, Investigator, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 30)

Lapo’s quote implied that African societal value systems influences the workers’ agency, intersubjectivity and workplace lived experience in Warranty Bank. Thus, Lapo suggests that the workers’ collective agency influences HRM practices in his bank. Some participants who expressed the divergence view argued that African contextual socio-cultural values are enduring and thus, shape HRM practices. Hamzah’s quote illustrates that African cultures are enduring.

“You cannot take our culture away; it shapes how we work together. If you go to the banks in the West, you will see Yoruba culture and values...if you go to the North; you will see the Hausa ways of doing things” (Hamzah, Branch Manager, Economy Bank, Lagos, Male, 47)

In addition to the convergence and divergence opinions expressed, 28 out of 53 participants contended that in recent times, there is a tendency towards socio-cultural value integration or cross-vergence and actual organisational practices which are influenced by African societal norms.

“...a lot of the banks have HR policies written based on Western policies, but in reality, it is a mixture of Western policies and our cultural values....”(Tori, Head of Talent and Performance Management, Fancy Bank, Lagos, Female, 42)

Tori statement illustrates a cross-vergence argument, that is, a combination of Western policies and contextual value systems in Fancy Bank. Most participants who shared the view that the HRM model in Africa is cross-verging contended that there are many factors driving HRM practices in Nigerian organisations. Some participants suggested that HRM practices are driven by factors such as market competition, globalisation, legal-political framework as well as contextual socio-cultural nuances.

“You know most of the banks’ policy is driven by the employment law, international market and all.....so the banks looks to the West for policy but the bankers have cultural mindsets” (Tori, Head of Talent and Performance Management, Fancy Bank, Lagos, Female, 42)

Tori’s quote highlights the role of the contextual regulations and global market in shaping the HRM model in Fancy Bank. Also, some of the participants posited that HRM practices in Nigeria, in recent times, have been driven by the presence of foreign organisations such as business consulting firms; business schools and oil and telecommunications multi-nationals. Some participants suggested that the presence of foreign multi-national organisations with better welfare packages for workers has prompted local organisations to embrace more international practices. Furthermore, many participants argued that some Nigerian banks have embraced integrating Western HRM practices with indigenous values. The situation is captured in the words of Zeem, a Regional Director in UBS Bank, who stated:

“I think very few organisations in Nigeria have things like crèches etc.....To me, Nigerian companies are just beginning to have these types of support systems because of the foreign owned multinational organisations, business schools and consulting firms. They are the ones driving the banks to adopt best-practice to retain their talents” (Zeem, Regional Director, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 49)

Zeem’s quote suggests that UBS Bank is implementing elements of Western welfare support in order to improve their workers’ productivity. For example, some participants argued that Nigerian banks have implemented crèches, modified working hours and other HRM policies to support nursing mothers. Most participants contended that banks in Nigeria are responding to the presence of foreign organisations that are able to attract a better skilled workforce due to better incentive packages and improved worker productivity. Thus, some participants maintain that the need to attract and retain a skilled workforce can lead to some organisations practising a blend of Western and Nigerian value systems.

“It is because of the foreign banks and consulting firms that Nigerian banks are putting better incentive packages in place” (Joseph, Group Head Financial Controller, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 41)

30 out of 35 participants who work for Nigerian banks with subsidiaries abroad argued that indigenous HRM practices are exported to their banks' subsidiaries. For example, Luru, a Group Head in Warranty Bank, contended that contextual socio-cultural considerations form the basis for formulating HRM policies in Nigeria.

“....So in this regard, I will say that our policies are designed and fitted for us with our foreign companies in mind” (Luru, Group Head, Internal Audit, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 37).

Luru further added that most of her bank's HRM policies are benchmarked against Western practices before they are transferred to subsidiaries abroad. In other words, Luru's views suggests that some Nigerian banks augment their HRM practices with global practices before exporting their HRM model to subsidiaries. Other participants suggested that the international ventures of Nigerian banks are driven by globalisation and the need for new market shares. Consequently, some participants contended that the presence of Nigerian banks in foreign countries has prompted a review of local practices. Luru summarised the situation in the quote below:

“Our policies are structured and designed for us, but we try to benchmark them against the best practice because we are an international organisation. The best practice policies are fitted into the Nigerian culture and we ensure it is a policy that can be implemented throughout our subsidiaries internationally” (Luru, Group Head, Internal Audit, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

The quote above illustrates the participant's view on how the HRM model in Warranty Bank is transferred to other countries through its subsidiaries. Luru's quote above has also suggested that some banks in Nigeria actively engage with indigenous socio-cultural factors which are subsequently blended with Western practices. Luru also highlighted that socio-cultural differences between Nigeria and other host countries may lead to conflict between the co-workers of different social structures and cultural backgrounds. Hence, by blending a more acceptable IHRM model with Nigerian indigenous practices, the banks could improve workers' interrelationships and create harmony in the workplace.

Furthermore, it was observed that the participants' perceptions of their organisational HRM model differed based on how they actively used their agency in shaping their lived

experiences. However, some participants claimed that the family and tribal structures, and socio-cultural factors, shapes the workers' workplace lived experiences under the HRM model. The perceptions of the participants with regard to how they view the roles of agency, structure and culture influences - in turn - how they perceive the HRM model in their organisations. For example, the statements of Cornelly and Chichi represent different realities depending on how they view their agency in relation to structures and cultures as shown below.

"I think the Nigerian bank work is based on merit and not who you know or cultural sentiment. If you do the work well you get promoted...that is it" (Cornelly, Branch Operations Manager, UBS Bank, Ogun, Male, 41)

"Mostly it is who you know, your family and your tribe.....culture also plays a part" (Chichi, Business Manager, Almond Bank, Lagos, Female, 36)

Cornelly's perception is that if he applies his agency, he will be rewarded with promotion while Chichi believes cultural and structure factors shapes workers' success. Thus, Cornelly implied that those who actively use their agency view the HRM model as 'fair' or merit-based. However, participants who believe that their HRM model is driven by societal structures and socio-cultural factors feel that there is nothing they can do to shape their lived experience except through external networking in order to progress. In addition, some participants posited that the Western HRM model is imposed on them by their organisations with little choice, while a number of the participants suggested that they contribute to how HRM policies are formulated and implemented.

"Policies are mostly top-down, once management decides..." (Adegbo, Group Head Operations, Frazer Bank, Lagos, Male, 50)

Adegbo's statement reflects the views of a few participants in that workers are not involved in shaping their organisational HRM policies. The study further explored the views and perceptions of workers in order to understand the social structures and cultural factors that shape the HRM model in the Nigerian banking industry. Workers' narratives provided accounts of how they use their agency to navigate organisational and national structures, and the religious and cultural factors that confront them daily, as illustrated by Saidu's quote below:-

"Since the banks have no prayer rooms for us, we just put praying mats by the staircase to pray..." (Saidu, Head of Foreign Operations, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 42)

The discussions in this section have introduced the various views of the participants under the HRM models in their organisations, highlighting four key arguments (i.e. convergence, divergence, cross-vergence and trans-vergence debates). However, there is a need to understand the underlying reasons for the differences of opinion. It is thus important to present in detail how the participants' perceptions of their lived experiences are influenced by the different HRM arguments. It is imperative to present and analyse the participants' views on some influencing Western and contextual social structures and cultures in the Nigerian banking industry in the next section using the convergence versus divergence debates.

6.3 Perceptions of Convergence versus Divergence Debates of an HRM Model: Nigerian Workers' Lived Experiences

The aim of this section is to present and analyse in detail the data on the Nigerian workers' convergence versus divergence views of their HRM models which was introduced in Section 6.2. The aim of this section will be achieved by elaborating on the role of Western organisational structures and Nigerian cultural factors in shaping the agency and lived experiences of the workers under the HRM model. It is important to present the findings on how the contextual HRM model is converging as well as diverging because the Nigerian environment presents different types of challenges and opportunities on to the workers' lived experiences. Hence, the participants' perceptions have focused mainly on some of the issues that they encounter at work.

“It is not easy working in the bank, no closing time, no support system, no flexible work arrangements for family, financial targets are high, the environment is harsh most time....”(Fem, Business Manager, Keys Bank, Kaduna, Male, 42)

Fem's quote illustrates his perception of some of the challenging conditions that Nigerian bank workers deal with in the workplace. From most of the participants' perceptions of their workplace lived experience accounts, a key issue is how Nigerian organisations adopt Western structures to address contextual social structures and cultural challenges and opportunities. Some Nigerian socio-cultural challenges and opportunities narrated by the participants include national structures such as legal, political, religious, cultural, colonial historical legacy and social factors. For example, many of the participants believed that Nigeria has Western-inspired employment laws, albeit, not up to date with changes in HRM policies and practices in the banking industry. Zeem posited that

Nigerian employment law is modelled after Western employment law, which suggests convergence. Zeem's views are captured below.

"Nigerian employment law is based on Western principles. However, the Nigerian employment law has not kept up with the changes in the banking industry" (Zeem, Regional Director, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 49)

Most participants also believed that the gap between the HRM model and Nigerian employment laws has created a relatively stronger bargaining power for employers.

"The gap in the Nigerian employment law couple with the poor state of the economy has left the employers in a stronger position" (Tricia, Head of Corporate Banking, UBS Bank, Lagos, Female, 39)

Tricia's quote illustrated her perception of the Nigerian business environment. Tricia believed that the business owners are in a strong position because of gaps in employment law and the poor state of the Nigerian economy. Tricia's view is supported by Tori. To illustrate, Tori, a Unit Head in the HRM department of Fancy Bank, posited that the Nigerian government is not doing enough to address gaps in HRM policies and practices. She believed that gaps in employment law has led to workers being exploited by employers through inappropriate arrangements such as long working hours and limited flexible working hours. In addition, Tori suggested that an abundant workforce in Nigeria has ensured that worker remuneration remains low.

"Employment law in Nigeria is stagnant. If employers waited for it to catch up we would be as dead as Stone Age. It is not the priority of the government and really it is still an employer's market. [...]. So it is who can do the work for less" (Tori, Head of Talent and Performance Management, Fancy Bank, Lagos, Female, 42).

Tori's quote above illustrates the importance of contextual structures and more so, why Fancy Bank copies the Western HRM model. Tori's quote also shows that there is a gap in Nigerian employment law, necessitating the need for employers to look internationally for best practices. More so, some participants argued that the Nigerian banking industry has evolved its own HRM guidelines based on Western policies in areas such as flexible working, home working and 'outsourced' workers.

"To fill the gap in the Nigerian employment law, some banks adopted Western policies to attract and retain talents using different types of work patterns and incentives" (Yeni, Branch Manager, Pound Bank, Lagos, Male, 40)

Yeni's quote implies a convergence view in Pound bank, where the HRM model in Nigeria is converging with Western policies. However, it is also important to note that many participants expressed concerns about how Western HRM policies are implemented in their organisations as illustrated in the quote of Sisi below.

"...they do not always implement Western policy properly..." (Sisi, Operations Manager, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 38)

Sisi's quote suggests that the negative perceptions of Western HRM policies in Warranty Bank may be due to poor implementation. In particular, Cornelly, the Branch Operations Manager of UBS Bank, thought that the lack of a legal framework to manage 'outsourced' workers made them susceptible to easy dismissal, relatively low wages and limited career options.

"[...] most workers in operations are outsourced. Even workers in marketing these days are all contract workers. So it is worse. First, they can be let go easily. Secondly, they are grossly under paid and thirdly, they do not get promoted" (Cornelly, Branch Operations Manager, UBS Bank, Ogun, Male, 41)

Cornelly's quote submits that UBS Bank is adapting Western policies such as using temporary contracts or outsourced workers to do tasks such as marketing and operations. The adoption of Western policies as highlighted by Cornelly's quote suggests a convergence view. Cornelly argued further that since there is no established Nigerian employment law, some banks do not adequately compensate contract workers. In addition, some participants disputed that it is not only outsourced workers that are randomly dismissed from employment with little or no notice period. Hamzah, a Branch Manager in Economy Bank, recounted his personal experience:

"It has happened to me before. I got to work on Monday, I tried to log in and I could not log in. Somebody else logged in successfully, that was when I suspected something was wrong. Then, I was in Abuja before I eventually got to Lagos where they handed me my suspension letter. I was not happy. It could have been worse, for some colleagues, it was a termination letter" (Hamzah, Branch Manager, Economy Bank, Sokoto, Male, 47)

Hamzah's quote suggests that he perceives some aspects of Western HRM practices negatively (e.g. applications of sanctions and dismissal) because of the way that they are implemented in Economy Bank. Many participants believe that all aspects of their organisational HRM policies are Western concepts and more importantly, believe that last

minute dismissal and the application of sanctions is foreign to Nigerian culture. For example, some participants suggested that employers are focused mainly on applying sanctions and dismissal when workers do not meet productivity targets instead of providing support to improve the workers' productivity and skills through training and motivation.

"...the targets are usually unrealistic but they are quick to dismiss or sanction severely" (Wunmi, Assistant Banking Officer, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 28)

Wunmi's quote suggests that Warranty Bank usually set unachievable productivity targets and applied sanctions frequently when the productivity targets were not met. A number of participants believed that before the adoption of the Western HRM model, the HRM department was less involved in managing workers' productivity, hence sanctions and dismissal were rarely implemented. The above argument is illustrated by Temi's quote.

"...the HR department was not involved with setting targets before and there were no such things as sanctions and dismissals. It is a new thing that came with the new HR model" (Temi, Internal Audit Officer, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 30)

Temi and Oye believed that, after the adoption of the HRM model, there has been more focus on the use of sanctions and dismissal of workers in the Warranty and UBS Banks. Furthermore, Oye, a Branch Operations Manager in UBS Bank, compared his lived experience under an HRM model to his other colleagues in ZBS Bank. He believed that poorly implemented Western HRM policies are an industry-wide practice which needs to be addressed:

"Most of the senior managers in ZBS Bank were about to sleep when they started receiving text messages on their Blackberries mobile phones that they have been sacked. Also, when TSB Bank right-sized, look at the style they used, no fore-notice, nothing" (Oye, Branch Operations Manager, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 48)

Oye's reference above was to ZBS Bank's dismissal of some of its executive and senior managers' teams. From Oye's perspective, he seemed upset that the random dismissal of workers has been allowed to go on for so long unchecked. 15 out of 53 of the participants contended that HRM policies in some Nigerian banks are converging with Western policies; however there are concerns among the workers that it is being implemented with little regards for workers' rights and welfare. A few of the participants believed that they

could not use their agency as HRM policies are handed down from employers who focus on financial gains alone.

On the contrary, some participants argued that HRM practices in some Nigerian banks are not converging with Western practices due to enduring contextual social structures and cultural factors. Doko, an Internal Audit Officer, argued that the HRM model in the Nigerian banking industry does not reflect Western practices but represents socio-cultural values as quoted below.

“I do not think we are copying the West. We have a unique HRM model here...”
(Doko, Internal Control Officer, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 32)

Doko’s view is supported by some of the participants who contended that political and religious institutions regularly interfere with HRM practices in organisations and consequently, shape the workers’ agency and lived experience.

“The politician and religious leaders shape some aspects of our HRM practices, particularly recruitment. This is important because in return, we get cash deposit”
(Shaki, Branch Manager, Keys Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

Shaki, a Branch Manager, argued that some aspects of the HRM model are driven by contextual political and religious factors because Keys Bank benefits from these institutions. Shaki’s quote suggests that Keys Bank derives financial benefits from Nigerian political and religious institutions, hence Keys Bank in turn recruits individuals nominated by political and religious institutions. The view among the participants was that of all political regimes that Nigeria has experienced from pre-colonial to colonial, then to military and now democratic rule, with military rule having had the most impact on the HRM model.

“We must remember that colonial legacy, political and democratic institutions all affect the HRM practices in Nigeria” (Gbemi, Senior Bank Officer, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 36)

Many participants shared Gbemi’s quote in that their colonial legacy, and past military and democratic governments have all shaped the HRM model in Nigeria through regulations. Besides, numerous participants believed that the past military rule’s legacies are partly to blame for aggressive and controlling management practices of organisations. Oye, a Branch Operations Manager in UBS Bank, who has been in the banking industry for over eight years, shared his thoughts in the quote below:

“There is a political part of it due to past military rules. The way military rulers treated people over the years in the society are influencing how people treat one another at the workplace. Then I think poverty plays a role too” (Oye, Branch Operations Manager, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 48)

From Oye’s quotes above, he expresses the view that HRM practices are divergent with Nigeria’s past military rulers’ practices in UBS Bank. It is crucial to note that some participants see military rule as part of Nigerian historical legacy, which impacts on the HRM model. Therefore, aggressive and controlling behaviours can be seen as a form of Nigerian cultural expressions. Thus, 13 out of the 53 participants argued that some harsh actions (e.g. frequent dismissals and sanctions) are culturally driven and not necessarily due to the Western HRM model. Oye’s quote can be contrasted with the earlier quotes above that impromptu dismissal is as a direct result of Western HRM policies (see Hamzah’s quote above). From the quotes above, the participants suggested that the harsh attitudes of senior managers to workers are commonplace within some parts of the Nigerian banking industry and it can be due to a combination of factors such as poorly implemented Western policies and military rule legacies. For example, 15 out of the 17 participants who work for Warranty Bank recounted experiences of an aggressive management style. Most of the participants who work for Warranty Bank reported that verbal assaults during performance meetings are common, and it is referred to as ‘*shredding*’. Luru, Group Head, Internal Audit in Warranty Bank, stated that:

“There is something we call ‘shredding’. If you do not perform up to expectation you are going to get the same scolding irrespective of your level” (Luru, Group Head, Internal Audit, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

Luru’s quote suggests that aggressive behaviour is entrenched in Warranty Bank, although the intent is for senior managers to drive workers’ productivity through tight control. Luru argued that a consequence of such aggressive military-style behaviour is that the agency of workers is negatively impacted as workers work under a sense of fear. Not every participant agreed that Nigeria’s past military rule contributed to the aggressive management style in some banks, or like those specifically observed in Warranty Bank. Fem, a Business Manager in Keys Bank, believed that the quest for control by senior managers drives the aggressive behaviour.

“I think it is a control thing for us because we are hard on our workers here. We are harsh to them...from the colonial rule” (Fem, Business Manager, Keys Bank, Kaduna, Male, 42)

Fem's quote maintains that aggressive behaviour is either cultural or handed down from colonial rule. Moreover, Fem believed that the HRM model in Keys Bank is influenced by politicians and religious leaders, especially the recruitment and grievance processes. The view that politicians and religious leaders influence HRM processes in Nigeria is illustrated by Omowale's quote below. Omowale, Assistant General Manager and Group Head in UBP Bank, believed that politicians and religious leaders interfere with some parts of HRM practices. According to Omowale, workers are inclined more towards the Nigerian traditional ways of settling disputes involves consulting external stakeholders like Pastors, Imams, politicians and tribal chiefs. Furthermore, he suggested that workers only use their organisations' grievance processes when other options have failed. Omowale contended that most workers believe that external stakeholders are more effective in handling grievances than an organisation's grievance procedures because the external stakeholders influence the outcome of the grievance processes unfairly through networking with senior managers.

"Some call on their Pastors, Imams or certain high ranking government officials, usually a Governor or a Permanent Secretary [...]. Some have even resulted into using traditional leaders and it is very effective. The problem is that many people view the disciplinary process as let's say a weapon of last resort. People do not take it until they have explored all other options" (Omowale, Assistant General Manager, Group Head Retail Products, UBP Bank, Lagos, Male, 43)

Omowale's quote above reveals that even when there are Western HRM policies in place, the Nigerian workers' thought processes and agency inclines more towards their traditional beliefs and institutions. Therefore, Omowale's quote suggests that the implementation of the HRM model in UBP bank seems to reflect a divergent approach. This divergent viewpoint is further supported by some of the participants who argued that traditional institutions are important to both individuals and the banks. This argument is captured in quotes of Shiru below.

"....the traditional institutions are important....to both individual workers and banks. The institutions help with employment and they give the banks businesses and so shape how we manage people..." (Shiru, Senior Banking Officer, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 33)

Shiru's quote illustrates that traditional institutions play a key role in ensuring that the HRM model in Warranty Bank is divergent. To some participants, traditional institutions provide social inclusion to both individuals and banks whilst excluding those that do not

abide by its customary norms. For example, Adegbo, a Group Head in Frazer Bank, posited that traditional institutions sanction individuals and banks through ‘social exclusion’. At the same time, it rewards individuals with traditional titles, especially people who have distinguished themselves within its cultural setting. According to Adegbo, traditional titles are accolades of prestige among Nigerians as demonstrated in his quote below:

“Some people can die for traditional titles. The traditional titles have no financial value, but because of Nigeria’s peculiarity, it has what we call social relevance. For example, in the East, if you have an Igwe (a traditional title for a chief in Eastern Nigeria) working in your bank, this can encourage the villagers and the Ibos (one of the majority tribes in eastern Nigeria) to deposit their cash in your bank” (Adegbo, Group Head Operations, Frazer Bank, Lagos, Male, 50)

Adegbo’s quote infers that associating with traditional institutions is more important to some Nigerians. By the same token, Adegbo’s quote submits that some banks derive steady revenue from associating with traditional institutions in their proximity. Some participants reported that a close relationship between traditional institutions and banks may mean that organisations have to accommodate with the demands of these institutions. Ben, a Customer Service Officer in Warranty Bank, argued that some banks feel obliged to employ people from their immediate tribe or people recommended by traditional rulers.

“If you are from Lagos and you are close to the royal family you can get a reference letter to a bank to influence your employment. Banks believe that if you are in the inner causes of traditional rulers they are guaranteed business and peace, and people in the area will be loyal to them in terms of doing business with them. So the benefit can be mutual” (Ben, Customer service Officer, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 34)

Ben’s quote proposed that HRM practices in Warranty Bank are diverging with local structures and cultural values. Also, Ben’s quote highlights the economic importance of how some workers use their agency collectively to achieve organisational objectives. Hence, the participants’ perceptions and lived experiences discussed so far in this section suggests that in some cases, the HRM model in Nigerian banks converges with Western practices and in other instances, it diverges with local practices. Many participants also argued that the agency of workers determines whether a particular HRM policy and practice will converge or diverge with local practices. The participants’ comments above emphasizes that they actively co-create their HRM model based on their collective

agency, intersubjectivity and the predominant structures and cultures that confront them daily. Some participants also indicate that the HRM model in some Nigerian banks reflects a cross-vergence practice which combines both convergence and divergence approaches and that these cross-vergence practices are sometimes transferred to subsidiaries outside Nigeria, indicating trans-vergence practices.

The next section will present and analyse the participants' views and experiences of cross-vergence and trans-vergence HRM model in Nigeria. It is important to discuss in detail the participants' perceptions of cross-vergence and trans-vergence views as the convergence versus divergence findings do not fully explain the various nuances that shape the HRM model in Nigeria. Further discussions on the cross-vergence and trans-vergence findings will ensure that a broader account of the participants' workplace lived experience is presented.

6.4 Perceptions of Cross-vergence versus Trans-vergence Debates of the HRM Model: Nigerian Workers' Lived Experiences

In this section, the participants' views and experiences of cross-vergence and trans-vergence HRM model in Nigeria will be presented and analysed in greater detail by building on the discussions from Section 6.2. The aim of this section will be achieved by first discussing the participants' perceptions of cross-vergence and afterwards present findings on trans-vergence. It was presented in Section 6.3 how Nigerian workers use their collective agency and intersubjectivity to shape the convergence/divergence HRM model in the Nigerian banks. The adoption of Western or/and traditional HRM practices in some cases depends on what contextual problems the organisation is addressing. For example, according to participants, it is a norm in Nigeria to address people using traditional, academic or social titles or simply addressing them as father of or mother of (usually their first child, e.g. father of John or mother of John). However, in some cases, using titles to address colleagues can create social barriers and hinder the flow of communication within organisations. Hence, participants reported that some banks in Nigeria adopted the use of a first name when addressing someone. Some participants argued that the use of first name served its purpose during the formative years of the banks as the organisations were set up by people within the same age group. The use of first name could be viewed as being convergent with Western practices. For example, Chichi, a Business Manager in Almond Bank, believed that addressing people by their first name is a European concept. Her quote below illustrates how she and her colleagues

resist the use of first name to address their manager, but rather opting to use the Nigerian term ‘oga’ (manager in Nigerian language):

“You know ideally we want to copy the European way of management, but our culture still comes into it. In my bank, employees are told to call their supervisors by their first name in order to break those walls between supervisors and their subordinates. At a point the bank said that they will start fining us. Even after the threat of fine, I still do it, sometimes I do not know; I just say (oga)” (Chichi, Business Manager, Almond Bank, Lagos, Female, 36)

Chichi’s comment suggests that when Almond Bank adopted Western policies, in practice, traditional values were introduced through the agency of the workers. In Almond Bank, it seems that at a policy level, HRM policies are convergent with Western concepts, but through the process of implementation, traditional values are introduced creating a resultant HRM practice which is cross-vergence in nature. To illustrate, Jay, a HRM Consultant in UBS Bank, shared her lived experience and perception of the HRM model in Nigeria.

“Nigeria is a very hierarchical society that definitely ascribes a lot to age. So in the bank you will see people who greet others as sir, madam and all that. Suddenly, they thought that it will be a good idea to introduce a policy where everybody will address each other by their first names. It is one thing to have it on paper and same is true of other policies of the bank that is there on paper, but in practice it did not actually exist. For example, this is really telling, the head of HRM at the time, was a woman, maybe have that traditional hierarchical ruling engrained in her and if you did not call her madam you are definitely not speaking to her. Never mind that she was driving that policy” (Jay, HRM Consultant, UBS Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

Jay’s quote above demonstrates her perception of how resilient cultural values are in UBS Bank. Jay posited that traditional hierarchical ruling is engrained in the subconscious thought processes of Nigerian workers. Therefore, some managers who are responsible for driving HRM policies sometimes end up enforcing traditional values. However, some participants have improvised ways of calling senior colleagues by using titles and part of their first names, hereby avoiding using their first names in isolation. Many participants were comfortable with this cross-vergence approach. To exemplify, Luru, a Group Head in Warranty Bank, believed that it was acceptable to combine titles with part of the first name when addressing colleagues.

“Even though officially we still tell employees to use their colleagues’ first names when addressing them, you will find employees showing respect to senior colleagues by using title and part of their first name. That is where issues like calling senior colleagues, Aunty Mi, Sis Kay, Uncle G etc come to play” (Luru, Group Head, Internal Audit, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

Luru’s comment above is an illustration of how some Warranty Bank’s workers could consciously use their agency to develop a cross-vergence practice. Likewise, the adoption of Western dress codes (e.g. suites and tie) in banks in Nigeria has been criticised by some participants. It was observed that the policy on the use of Western codes differed among banks in Nigeria based on the ownership structure. For example, some banks owned mainly by Nigerians enforced Western dress codes on their employees while banks owned by foreign investors were found to encourage their workers to wear traditional dresses except when going for external meetings. Sheer, a Group Head in SBP Bank, contended that the three foreign-owned banks in Nigeria have a HRM dress code which diverges with local customs.

“In SBP Bank you can wear your native attires except when you have external meetings. Otherwise, on Fridays I wear native clothes and slippers. Even the Director wears a shirt and chinos to the office, and in the other two foreign-owned banks. Some local banks are trying to adopt some of these things slowly” (Sheer, Group Head, Non-Interest Banking, SBP Bank, Lagos, Male, 39)

From Sheer’s quote, there is evidence of a cross-vergence approach in SBP Bank where both Western and traditional dress codes are practised. Based on Sheer’s perception from the quote above, traditional dress codes are the practice in foreign-owned banks in Nigeria while external meetings are still conducted in a Western dress code. Different patterns of dress codes were observed among workers in Nigerian-owned banks where workers are required to wear Western dresses most of the time. Furthermore, the imposition of Western dress codes appears to be limited to head offices and branches operating in the southern part of Nigeria, as exemplified by Chuks’ quote below.

“The Western dress code is enforced in the head office in Lagos and some southern branches but not enforced in northern branches” (Chuks, Banking Officer, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 32)

Chuks statement shows that some workers in the northern branches in Warranty Bank have more flexibility in their dress code, and their dresses reflects local customs with some occasional Western dress. Moreover, Adegbo, a Group Head in Frazer Bank, argued

that the policy of dress code varies among banks in Nigeria. He suggested that while some banks allow their workers to wear their native tribe dress, others only allow casual dress codes (e.g. a T-shirt and denim) on Fridays.

“You are allowed to dress down on Fridays and put on your jalabiyah (male Muslim dress)” (Adegbo, Group Head Operations, Frazer Bank, Lagos, Male, 50)

Adegbo’s comment illustrates how Frazer Bank incorporates both Western and traditional dress codes in their HRM model, suggesting a cross-vergence approach. Some participants argued that Western and traditional dress codes are not implemented equally depending on the banks or on the part of Nigeria that one is studying as illustrated in the quotes of Sheer, Chuks and Adegbo above. Nevertheless, there are elements of Western and traditional dress codes reported by participants, suggesting a cross-vergence approach in some banks. Besides, a blend of Western and traditional practices are transferred to other countries through some Nigerian banks’ having subsidiaries abroad. To elucidate, Luru believed that HRM policies are designed mainly for the Nigerian context, but eventually can be implemented in subsidiaries abroad. She posited that HRM policies are benchmarked against international practices, and then transferred to Warranty Bank’s subsidiaries abroad. She contended that Warranty Bank reinvented its contextual history by refining it with Western practices, after which, it is exported to its subsidiaries abroad. This portrays a trans-vergent view. Luru argued that the trans-vergence HRM practices of Warranty Bank are driven by globalisation and the need for new market shares.

"Our policies are structured and designed for us, but we try to benchmark them against Western practices because we are an international organisation. The best practice policies are fitted into Nigerian culture and we ensure it is a policy that can be implemented throughout our subsidiaries internationally. So in this regard, I will say that our policies are designed and fitted for us with our foreign companies in mind" (Luru, Group Head, Internal Audit, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 37).

Luru’s quote above conveys how Warranty Bank actively transfers their HRM model to subsidiaries in other countries, suggesting a trans-vergence HRM model. Moreover, it appears that some level of cross-vergence practice takes place before the trans-vergence HRM model is exported. The lived experience accounts from participants suggested that the trans-vergence HRM model has been relatively successful in the subsidiaries of some Nigerian banks as can be seen in Adegbo’s comment below.

“We transfer our HRM policies to our subsidiaries and I have not heard or witnessed any issues. HRM here are implementable in other African countries....however I heard that some banks have issues implementing their HRM abroad. I think this is due to the individual bank worker” (Adegbo, Group Head Operations, Frazer Bank, Lagos, Male, 50)

Adegbo’s comments further illustrates that Frazer Bank has a trans-vergence HRM model in place. However, some participants maintained that Nigerian workers’ agency can make implementation difficult due to their social-cultural values which sometimes come in to conflict with the culture of the host country. The socio-cultural problems experienced by participants in implementing a trans-vergence HRM model illustrate the diverse socio-cultural make up of Africa. More importantly, the participants argued that the HRM model in Nigeria needs to be adjusted before being exported to other African countries. Many African countries share at least some similar cultural values; hence there has been a call for a HRM model based on African values. Thus, there is a need to consider the workers’ views on an African-inspired HRM model.

6.5 Perceptions of an African-Inspired HRM Model: Workers’ Views and Lived Experiences

The aim of this section is to present and analyse the data on the workers’ perceptions of an African-inspired HRM model. This aim will be achieved by exploring how workers view certain African values that can be used to model an African-inspired HRM policy and practice. Foremost, many participants argued that managing the diverse tribes in the workplace is challenging because of broader societal inter-tribal problems. Oye, a Branch Operations Manager in UBS Bank, contended that harmonising and motivating different tribes in Nigerian workplaces will have a big benefit, but how to go about it remains a challenge to many employers. 20 out of the 53 participants also contended that employers generally avoid developing HRM policies to manage diversity; this is illustrated in Oye’s comment below.

“We have so many different cultures, traditions, society types within Nigeria and they have different ways of doing things. So first, how do we harmonise all these different traditional ways of motivating people to work? I think that is the question. So how do we then harmonise using traditions” (Oye, Branch Operations Manager, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 48)

Oye’s statement implies that there is a gap in managing diversity in some banks in Nigeria. Oye’s quote also suggested that there are different traditional ways of managing

workers in Nigeria which needs to be explored. Jay shares Oye's perspective in that there are different traditional ways of managing workers in Nigeria. However, Jay posited that any HRM policy based on a Nigerian value system is usually viewed with suspicion by workers. Jay suggested that a good starting point for developing an African-inspired HRM model could be the use of 'oriki' (i.e. personal praise poetry recited by south-west Nigerian tribe) concept.

"An African HRM model is possible. For example, a good starting is the concept of 'oriki' which can be developed and used to motivate workers. There are other African concepts such as 'ubuntu' (i.e. an African concept of interconnectedness of humanity through compassion and togetherness) ..." (Jay, HRM Consultant, UBS Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

From Jay's comment, the concept of 'oriki' could be included in HRM policy and practice in Nigeria. According to Jay, 'oriki', a personal praise song or poetry unique to Nigeria, can be developed further and used as a motivational tool. Jay also proposed incorporating another African concept, 'ubuntu', which describes the group orientation of African lifeworld through the interconnectedness of humanity through compassion and togetherness. However, some participants posited that banks should stay away from cultural and religious problems because of unfavourable perceptions among some workers from different tribes in Nigeria. For example, Adegbo, a Group Head, thinks that tribalism is prevalent in the Nigerian banking industry. He suggested that the dominant presence of a particular tribe in certain banks could be as a result of recruitment process based on tribalism.

"Tribalism is prevalent in Nigeria. In some organisations if their HRM lead is an Ibo person there is a tendency for the person to recruit only Ibo. Likewise, if the HRM lead is a Yoruba, there is every possibility he will recruit only Yoruba people. Same can be said of a Hausa person too" (Adegbo, Group Head Operations, Frazer Bank, Operations, Lagos, Male, 50)

The quote implies that tribalism may conflict with HRM practices, particularly the recruitment processes. Thus, socio-cultural values such as 'oriki' may be viewed as siding with one tribe over others. In summary, the implication of the discussions on workers' perceptions so far is that on one hand, cultural concepts such as 'oriki' maybe viewed with suspicion. On the other hand, some participants deemed that Western practices are not incompatible with the workers' way of life. Consequently, the participants argued that they complained to their employers about how HRM practices negatively impacted on

their lived experiences. Many participants maintained that while their family lives are shaped by Nigerian socio-cultural value systems, the workplaces are mostly structured and driven by Western policies.

“On one hand, you have family and traditional needs and on the other hand, you have work demands. Banks are not making things easy for their workers, especially for married people” (Gaffy, Team Lead, Information Technology, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 35)

According to the participants, in some instances, the Western policies may be poorly implemented because of the agency of workers which is driven by African thought systems leading to a work-life conflict. To further explore the workers' perceptions of their work-life conflict, the next section will present and analyse the participants lived experiences of the 'two worlds' (i.e. the work-world and the lifeworld).

6.6 Perceptions of Work-life Conflicts: Workers' Lived Experiences

The aim of this section is to examine the workers' perceptions of their work-life conflicts. This will be achieved by discussing how workers' balance their work commitments with family and societal demands. Thereafter, this section discusses the effect of some intersectional gender issues on work-life conflict because family lives are traditionally structured around the expected roles that women are socialised to play in the various Nigerian tribes. According to some participants, in Nigerian traditional society, couples with children leave their children with their grandparents when they go to work, however due to a late retirement age, grandparents are no longer always available to provide childcare support. Consequently, many participants report that in a family where both parents are in waged employment, they have to seek alternative childcare arrangements which puts pressure on working times. Some participants posited that a growing number of working parents now leave their children in crèches or other available childcare support arrangements. For example, Ora, an Ibo woman based in Lagos, contended that workers based in Lagos are moving away from the traditional support systems for children to the use of crèches, nannies and house-helpers.

“Back then, by the time our mothers were 60 years, they would retire. Today, we have 80 years old women still active. So, they are not available to provide that support that we once had. So people are using crèches, nanny and house-helpers” (Ora, Head Retail Banking Operations, UBS Bank, Lagos, Female, 43)

Ora's quote suggests that the workers' work-life lived experiences are adapting as a result of changes in childcare support systems in Nigerian cities like Lagos. According to Ora, traditional support systems for childcare are changing as a result of the retirement age of workers increasing. Some participants suggested that childcare support systems are few and unreliable in Lagos. To illustrate, Tayo, a Yoruba woman based in Lagos, posited that sometimes leaving children with nannies, crèches or other support networks is not always good for family life.

"The fact is that if you are not careful, you will have other people train your children for you because you are practically not there. If your spouse is not supportive it can affect your relationship. Sometimes if you are a driven person and you get consumed in the fact that you want to pursue a career at the expense of your home... There is a thin line between getting it right in career and getting it wrong at home." (Tayo, Head Treasury Operations, Keys Bank, Lagos, Female, 36)

Tayo's quote suggests that childcare systems could be shaping the workers agency and their work-life lived experiences positively and/or negatively. Tayo's quote portrays how her family life have been impacted by an inadequate childcare support system in Lagos. More importantly, Tayo's quotes show how Nigerian working parents like her from the south are adjusting to changing contextual structures such as childcare systems. In addition, some participants viewed the changes in childcare systems with suspicion because it does not always support the workers' working hours in Lagos. In particular, some participants who are working parents complained that some of the banks' long working hours (i.e. an average of 7:00am to 8:30pm daily) affects their ability to take care of their children. Tayo explained her daily routine:

"I close as late as 7 or 8pm, by the time I close there is traffic congestion. I get home around 10pm or sometimes later. By the time I go through all these, we get to sleep around 12pm and wake up at 4am. For some workers, this is our routine. So, it practically takes your time from you" (Tayo, Head Treasury Operations, Keys Bank, Lagos, Female, 36)

Tayo's quote highlights other structural problems such as traffic congestion which affects some participants' work-life lived experiences, especially in Lagos. A combination of long working hours and traffic congestion implies that participants hardly have time for their children. Many participants contended that due to limited job opportunities and relatively high wages in the banking industry, workers seem powerless to do anything

about the long working hours imposed on them. Consequently, a number of participants working in Lagos resorted to making compromises in order to take care of their children. Many of the participants argued that in an attempt to ensure that children are given adequate parental care, one of the parents usually has to give up his or her job to nurture their children. Similarly, the participants maintained that in many instances, working women in the South and the North give up their jobs as men are seen as the ‘head’ of families in most Nigerian tribes. In particular, there are very few Muslim women workers from Northern Nigeria working in the banking industry compared to women workers from Southern Nigeria. More so, female participants reported that women workers from the South tend to resign their employment when they marry and have children. Thus, there are fewer women at CEO-level from Southern Nigeria and none from the North (see Appendix 3). Furthermore, Ora, an Ibo Christian woman based in Lagos believed that working women resign to take care of their families because their husbands asked them to. She suggested that it is difficult to help these working women because they are usually very secretive about it.

“Most workers from the north that are women are not many in the bank.....The truth is that because of how secretive we can be, I am unlikely to come to work to tell my manager that my husband said I should resign even if that is what he told me at home. So, we may never really have the underlying reasons” (Ora, Head Retail Banking Operations, UBS Bank, Lagos, Female, 43)

Ora’s quote illustrates the pressure that some women participants from the southern and northern tribes face both at home and in the broader Nigerian society. Some Christian and Muslim male participants confirmed that they asked their wives to resign and encouraged them to take up government work which they believe is less stressful and will give their wives more time to take care of the children. Fem, a Christian based in northern Nigeria, shares his views below.

“My wife works with the federal government. Before 3pm she is back. So she has time to attend to the children (Fem, Business Manager, Keys Bank, Kaduna, Male, 42).

Fem’s quote reinforces the view among many of the participants that Muslim and Christian women tend to take flexible jobs that allows them to spend more time with the children. However, some participants argued that they do not believe that both parents should be working as this will negatively impact on the upbringing of children. Hence,

married working women usually opt to resign their employment in order to cater for their children. Below are the views of Joseph, a Christian Ibo based in Lagos, on married working women:

“I do not have anything against it. It is just that I think that career for women in the bank are very stressful. It is very stressful because there are no flexible work hours” (Joseph, Group Head Financial Controller, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 41).

It can be inferred from Joseph’s quote that some Lagos-based participants do not feel that their banks are providing flexible work arrangements for working parents. According to the participants, the decision of some women to resign their employment is not due to cultural and spousal pressure alone; some Lagos-based women complained about gender discrimination and sexual harassment at work. Chichi, an Ibo Christian woman, argued that women workers face discrimination in various forms in the Nigerian workplace such as being denied opportunity to take part in certain tasks, sexist remarks and sexual harassment:

“Women are discriminated against in the workplace and that can never stop. Sometimes the remarks made, even by fellow women colleagues who are in senior positions. They assume that because you are a woman they cannot give you certain responsibilities. They may end up giving the job to someone junior to you just because he is a man who is not even better than you” (Chichi, Business Manager, Almond Bank, Lagos, Female, 36)

From Chichi’s quote, some Lagos-based women feel quite powerless and unable to use their agency to influence HRM practices based on sexist behaviour. Chichi’s view that there is discrimination against women in some Nigerian workplaces implies that it may be driven by an underlying enduring structure which is perceived to be the norm in the workplace. Furthermore, Chichi reported that there are instances when women in the early stages of pregnancy are not given employment. Chichi suggests that some banks have an ‘unwritten policy’ of no pregnancy for the first two years of employment.

“These policies are not written in the bank’s HRM policy manuals, but you see some practices that makes you believe that women applicants who are pregnant are not given jobs” (Chichi, Business Manager, Almond Bank, Lagos, Female, 36)

Chichi’s quote highlights issues that some of the women’s lived experiences relates to potential gaps in Nigerian employment law as discussed earlier in Section 6.2. Some of the participants believe that many Nigerian banks have policies of no discrimination, but

most women participants based in Lagos maintained that there is discrimination in the workplace. According to some of the participants, there are instances where working women in Lagos had their three months of maternity leave shortened because they had not been with the organisation long enough. The undocumented discrimination was recounted mainly by women in the south. Isy, a Group Head in Warranty Bank, complained that she was denied a performance review because she took maternity leave within a performance review year.

“I was told that I will not be appraised that year because I went on maternity. Normally they will not even tell you why” (Isy, Group Head, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

Isy’s quote highlights some of the HRM practices which negatively impacts on working women who are pregnant in Warranty Bank. However, some participants argued that women are not necessarily discriminated against, but rather, both men and women face similar workplace challenges. For example, Tori argued that both men and women face potential discrimination and sexual harassment, as quoted below.

“Gender abuse happens to both men and women, in any occupation that is customer facing - same situations affect flight attendants. It is the individuals’ principles or lack of it that allows people to do what they choose. Men face the same level of harassment; they just handle it better, maybe” (Tori, Head of Talent and Performance Management, Fancy Bank, Lagos, Female, 42).

Tori’s quote suggests that there is abuse and discrimination in the workplace and so, she does not consider it a gender issue. Furthermore, Tori’s quote suggests that individual or collective agentic power should deal with such problems as it appears that HR is useless at dealing with the problem. Thus, there are some important intersectional gender issues which affects the workers’ workplace lived experience and agency. In particular, when it comes to work-life balance, women from the Yoruba and Ibo tribes in Nigeria reported that they are at a disadvantage compared to the men participants. Generally, as long as the HRM model in the Nigerian workplace supports a work-life balance, many participants feel that it will not matter to them if the HRM model is converging, diverging, cross-verging or trans-verging.

6.7 Summary

The main aim of this chapter was to present and analyse the findings with regard to the participants’ lived experiences under the HRM model and whether they viewed this as

converging, diverging, cross-verging and trans-verging. The participants confirmed that there are elements of the convergence, divergence, cross-vergence and trans-vergence arguments in their banks. Most of the participants argued that the HRM policies in their banks, in theory, are converging with Western values while in practice, it appeared to be cross-verging with both Western and indigenous norms. Trans-vergence HRM policies and practices were reported by workers in banks with subsidiaries outside of Nigeria.

It was observed that socio-cultural factors influences the participants' lived experiences and agency which in turn shapes the HRM models in the participants' banks. In many instances, it appeared that some of the participants were unable to use their agency and intersubjectivity to influence HRM practices due to inadequate employment laws and a lack of flexible work arrangements. There are also reported cases of gender biases toward some pregnant women. Social structures such as political and traditional institutions were also reported to influence the HRM practices in some banks.

A key objective of this chapter was to address research question one, which was achieved by discussing the extent to which the HRM model in Nigerian banks affects the skilled workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experiences. Having achieved the aim of this chapter, there is now the need to address how organisations link their HRM model to organisational strategies in order to address the contextual social structures, cultural factors and to improve workers' experience. It was observed from the findings that organisational strategies influence the HRM model in some Nigerian banks and the workers' lived experience. Due to this observation, further data collection was required to address this concern. Thus, the following chapter discusses in detail how the HRM model in Nigeria is linked to organisational strategies and consequently, how this can affect the workers' lived experiences.

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE SHRM MODEL IN NIGERIA: WORKERS' ORGANISATIONAL AND LEWORLD EXPERIENCES

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, as was the case in Chapter Six, the emphasis will be on the workers' views and perceptions of their lived experiences under the HRM model. The main goal of Chapter Seven is to present and analyse the data that will address research questions two and three. Research questions two and three are restated respectively: 'To what extent does the SHRM model in Nigerian banks affect the skilled workers' perceptions of their work-life lived experiences?' and 'To what extent are the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences affected by their organisational strategies under the SHRM model?' Therefore, the main focus of Chapter Seven is to present and analyse the findings on how the workers' agency, structure and cultural factors influences the SHRM best practice versus best-fit argument. Moreover, in this chapter, the focus shifts from the workers' perceptions of the HRM model to their views on the SHRM model in their organisations. The intention is to situate the workers' lived experiences within the best practice versus best-fit SHRM framework.

It was observed in Chapter Six that how Nigerian banks implement their HRM models to achieve organisational objectives affects the workers' workplace lived experience and the HRM model itself. Consequently, aligning the organisational objectives to HRM model infers a strategic choice. Strategic choice implies linking organisational strategies to HRM policies and practices under the SHRM model. Thus, it is imperative to close this gap by presenting the findings on how the SHRM model in Nigerian banks' is shaped by contextual socio-cultural factors and worker agency. This chapter is structured into linked sections in order to adequately explore the various structural and cultural factors that influence the Nigerian workers' lived experiences. Chapter Seven starts by presenting and analysing the workers' perceptions of the SHRM model and how the SHRM model links to the HRM debates in Nigeria in order to set the scene for the discussions in this chapter. Section 7.3 engages with how the workers' agency and lived experience is shaped by the SHRM best practice model. Thereafter, Section 7.4 presents the workers' perceptions of the SHRM best fit model. Chapter Seven concludes with Section 7.5 which summarises the main discussion points in this chapter.

7.2 Overview of Workers' Perceptions of the SHRM Model and Links to HRM Debates in Nigeria

This section presents and analyses the data on the participants' perceptions of the SHRM model and links to the convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence HRM debates in some Nigerian banks and how it can influence the workers' lived experience. This section also explores the workers' views on how their lived experiences are shaped by organisational strategies. Many participants argued that the HRM model is linked to organisational strategies in some Nigerian banks. However, opinions differed on how the organisational strategies link to the HRM model. The participants' opinions differs because of the various contextual structures and cultures such as the business and socio-cultural environments which shapes the HRM model in Nigeria. Thus, according to the participants, the nature of SHRM in Nigeria reflects the workers' agency, organisational structures, cultures and business strategies. For example, Beeb, an Internal Control Team Leader in Warranty Bank, believed that there is synergy between the HRM model, team dynamics and organisational strategies.

"I think there is a high level of synergy between HRM and organisational strategies. We as a team are driven to deliver utmost customer satisfaction and we cannot achieve customer satisfaction without teamwork, discipline and constant development of self" (Beeb, Internal Control Team Leader, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 33)

Beeb's view illustrates how Warranty Bank consciously uses its workers' collective agency and intersubjectivity through teamwork to achieve organisational strategies. It can be inferred from Beeb's argument that Warranty Bank's strategic focus is delivering good customer experience and to deliver good customer service, it is focusing on developing its workers' skills and teamwork. Furthermore, Beeb's quote suggests that there is a strong link between the HRM model and organisational strategies in Warranty Bank. Hence, the HRM model in Warranty Bank reflects the organisation's strategies and workers agency. For example, Gbola, a Control Officer in Warranty Bank, suggested that HRM practices are linked to his bank's organisational strategies.

"HRM policies are designed to aid the achievement of organisational strategies. The mission statement of the bank includes amongst other things, adding value to all stakeholders, and this includes staff" (Gbola, Control Officer, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 28)

Gbola's quote highlights how the SHRM model links to organisational strategies through mission statements in some banks. It could be inferred from Gbola's views that linking the SHRM model to organisational strategies can improve the workers' workplace lived experience. For example, 45 out of the 53 participants posited that there are SHRM policies in place to meet the organisations' strategies such as recruitment, training, development, performance and appraisal, as illustrated by Beeb's quote below.

"The SHRM strategy reflects the organisational strategies which are demonstrated in recruitment strategy, training and development policy, appraisal and business acquisition..." (Beeb, Internal Control Team Leader, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 33)

Beeb's quote demonstrates a link between the HRM model and organisational strategies in his bank. Furthermore, some participants argued that SHRM policies are usually benchmarked against global best practices. In other words, a convergent HRM model linked with organisational strategies suggests a SHRM best practice model. A convergent debate suggests a set of Western best practices which can improve the agency of workers and the SHRM model in Nigeria. The argument here is that improving the SHRM model and organisational strategies should lead to improving the workers' skills and lived experience as demonstrated by Nike's quote below.

"Most of the SHRM policies and business strategies are copied from the West. For example our training strategy aligns with business strategy of having best people and being the dominant bank" (Nike, E-Business Manager, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

Nike's quote suggests that the convergent HRM model and organisational strategy therein are copied from the West in some banks. It may be inferred from Nike's quote that when the HRM model and the organisational strategy aligns, it tends to improve the workers' experiences and skills. However, not everyone agreed that improving the SHRM model has resulted in improved experiences. Some participants believe some banks in Nigeria have not done enough to address the workers' work-life lived experience challenges. To illustrate, Yoad, the Head of Oil and Gas in Keys Bank, posited that reducing the long working hours will improve the workers' lifeworld as well as their workplace lived experiences as demonstrated in his view below.

"SHRM practices in the 'newer' banks do not care about your family situation or religious requirements. You must not be late for work, but you can go home at 12

midnight. There is no closing time there is only time for when you have to start your duty. You are not paid for extra hours of work. You go to work on Saturdays and Sundays, and even work on public holidays. In other countries, you are paid for extra hours done. However, in Nigeria, you clock in but you do not clock out. You just work and work as if you are made to work, all other personal matters are affected or put on hold” (Yoad, Head of Oil and Gas, Keys Bank, Lagos, Male, 46).

Yoad’s quote pinpoints that the SHRM model in Keys Bank has inadequate provisions for work-life balance. In particular, Yoad believes that long working hours affects the Nigerian workers’ ability to fulfil their personal life responsibilities. As a result, there is a negative perception of the SHRM model amongst some of the participants. Although Yoad argued that workers are not paid for any extra hours/days working, this is not necessarily the case in other countries. Yoad’s view that other countries pay for extra hours of work is an assumption based on his perception of how he felt SHRM best practice should work. However, Yoad’s argument is that working in a bank is so demanding that it affects the workers’ personal life. Some banks in Nigeria align their SHRM model with socio-cultural factors to ensure a best fit approach. The best fit approach can be compared to the divergent debates in that banks are actively considering contextual factors in SHRM policies and practices. For example, Subomi, a Marketing Manager in Economy Bank, argued that socio-cultural factors are included in his bank’s SHRM model as illustrated in the quote below:

“Nigeria is a multi-cultural society and we are Africans. So we consider cultural factors and ways of doing things in our SHRM policies and we link this approach to our overall strategies and objectives for the bank.....The managers are humans so they interpret policies based on their African culture” (Subomi, Marketing Manager, Economy Bank, Lagos, Male, 40).

As demonstrated by Subomi’s quote, Economy Bank has provisions for socio-cultural factors in their SHRM model which is linked to their organisational strategies. Subomi’s quote also suggests a divergent HRM model linked to organisational strategies which imply the SHRM best fit model. Subomi’s quote further implies that through the agency of managers which reflects societal values, the SHRM model in Economy Bank will always have a divergent or best-fit approach. In addition, some of the participants argued that the SHRM best fit model can also reflect a cross-vergent view in cases where the HRM model of banks reflects both Western policies and cultural values. For example, Fayó, the Head of Internet Banking in UBS Bank, contended that most banks’ SHRM

model has both best practices policies and cultural values. According to Fayó, the cross-vergent HRM model is linked to organisational strategies, thus implying SHRM best fit.

“Most banks’ HRM policies and practices reflect in part Western best practices and Nigerian unique cultural values and norms. {...} also the HRM is strategic because it is linked to the organisation’s strategies which is used in our subsidiaries abroad” (Fayo, Head of Internet Banking, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 40).

It can be inferred from Fayó’s quote that the UBS Bank’s HRM policies and practices is a cross-vergent model which is aligned with organisational strategies. Fayó’s quote also suggests that the cross-vergent SHRM model is exported to the UBS Bank’s subsidiaries outside of Nigeria, thus, indicating a trans-vergent SHRM model. In summary, both a cross-vergent and a trans-vergent HRM approach when linked with organisational strategies, implies a SHRM best fit model.

From the participants’ views discussed in this section, there are indications that some Nigerian banks practice a SHRM model with strong links to organisational strategies. 20 out of the 53 participants suggested that the SHRM model is linked to both Western policies and contextual factors. More importantly, it can be implied that linking organisational strategies to HRM policies infers a strategic choice. The strategic choice involves how best to implement the SHRM model. According to some participants, SHRM choices may involve adopting a convergent view (Western best practices) or a divergent view (contingent best fit approach). Either of the two SHRM models (i.e. best practice versus best fit) may be shaped by contextual structures and cultural factors with consequences on the workers’ lived experiences. Thus, it is imperative to discuss these two SHRM models further. The next section will present and analyse the perceptions of the participants in relation to best practices, and how they perceive the SHRM model shaping their workplace lived experience.

7.3 Perceptions of the SHRM Best Practice Model – Workers’ Agency and Lived Experiences

The aim of this section is to present and analyse the findings on how agency, social structures and cultural factors shape the SHRM best practice model and the workers’ lived experience. To achieve the aim of this section, the participants’ views, thoughts and perceptions will be discussed in relation to their workplace lifeworld. Most of the workers interviewed gave various accounts of how their organisations implement the SHRM best

practice model. Most participants contended that the goal of banks is mainly financial and how SHRM strategies are aligned to help banks achieve their objectives with a lack of focus on workers' welfare. Furthermore, some participants argued that in implementing the SHRM best practice model, Nigerian banks are simply copying from other countries. The viewpoints below of Lola summarises these perceptions:

"[...]...they try to copy from Western countries. They only pick those things that favour the bank and its management, and not the workforce's welfare...the part that favours increased profit for the bank not the SHRM model". (Lola, Branch Operations Manager, Apple Bank, Lagos, Female, 42)

Lola's quote demonstrates that Apple Bank practises the SHRM best practice model. Lola believed that Apple Bank focuses exclusively on financial objectives by copying foreign practices. By so doing, Apple Bank imposes Western cultural practices and structures on the workers' agency. Consequently, some participants believed that how the SHRM best practice model is implemented in some banks does not adequately support their workers' welfare. However, a few participants argued that the SHRM best practice model in some Nigerian banks is not always copied from the West, but copied from other banks and organisations within Nigeria itself. Some banks benchmark their SHRM model with those of other banks to attract and retain the best talents in Nigeria. For example, Hamzah, a Branch Manager in Economy Bank, contended that the move to the SHRM best practice model is driven mainly by the need for some Nigerian banks to measure how their workers contribute to business profits.

"What we now have is SHRM professionals going out to study what is happening in the environment and they want to see how the SHRM model affects profits of banks" (Hamzah, Branch Manager, Economy Bank, Sokoto, Male, 47).

Hamzah's quote suggests that the SHRM best practices model is beyond copying policies and practices from other countries. Rather, Hamzah's argument illustrates how Economy Bank workers use their agency to shape their SHRM model through competitive benchmarking in order to improve on the organisation's profits. A SHRM best practice model may not always translate to improved worker welfare or work-life balance as organisations overtly focus on profitability. However, the SHRM best practice model provides a more consistent approach to managing workers. For example, Chuks, a Banking Officer in Warranty Bank, posited that banks should focus primarily on their

financial objectives. Chuks argued that workers should be managed by a common SHRM best practice model so as to ensure fairness.

“I think the SHRM model should focus mainly on the financial goal with little considerations for other factors to ensure fairness to all employees” (Chuks, Banking Officer, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 28).

Chuks contended that a common SHRM model will keep ‘controversial’ cultural factors out, and ensure that all workers are treated fairly in Warranty Bank. Moreover, Tayo, the Head of Treasury Operations in Keys Bank, posited that contextual issues should not be included in SHRM policies due to the complexity of managing them. Tayo’s view of the SHRM best practice model is stated below:

“I do not believe in bringing traditions into bank’s policy because there are several cultures, beyond Nigerians....there are expatriates. So, to achieve equality, you have to implement a policy that will cut across Nigerian tribes. I think it is better if we exclude traditions” (Tayo, Head Treasury Operations, Keys Bank, Lagos, Female, 36).

Tayo’s quote illustrates how some participants perceive the SHRM best practice model’s intention is to reduce the complexities that go with managing diversity in some organisations in Nigeria. Furthermore, some participants believe that an underlying reason for adopting the SHRM best practice model is because some banks do not want to be seen by external stakeholders as favouring one religious and/or cultural group over others. Religious and inter-tribal troubles are ongoing concerns in Nigeria. For example, Fem, a Business Manager in Keys Bank, suggested that since the establishment of democratic rule in Nigeria, most politicians use tribal and religious diversity in the country to foster their own political goals. Fem argued further that a consequence of religious manipulation is inter-tribal clashes which may percolate through some banks because of security concerns for workers in some regions in Nigeria.

“[.] Due to recent religious issues, we tend to move in groups and to safety grounds. I was born in Kaduna. In the 1990s when democracy started [...] the politicians used religion to divide the people and that’s what happened. That’s why Kaduna is divided into two now. So banks move away from religious or cultural issues in their policies” (Fem, Business Manager, Keys Bank, Kaduna, Male, 42).

The above quote exemplifies how broader religious and socio-cultural factors may influence the workers’ agency, which in turn shapes the SHRM model. Thus, Fem’s view

reinforces the viewpoint that some banks in Nigeria maybe adopting the SHRM best practice model in order to avoid engaging with the contextual issues affecting workers. In addition, some participants believed that the SHRM best practice model is required because all workers have some Western education and therefore are exposed to some degree of Western culture. Some participants maintained that they are no longer connected to their traditional values and do not even know concepts like ‘*oriki*’ due to the influence of Western culture on their lifeworld. For example, Ora advocated for Western SHRM policies as stated below.

“To some extent in organisations in Nigeria, we have been westernised. I am indifferent to SHRM polices because I have been exposed to Western culture.....SHRM policies have a lot of provisions that cater for worker’s welfares” (Ora, Head Retail Banking Operations, UBS Bank, Lagos, Female, 43).

Ora’s quote suggests that her lived experiences and lifeworld has been influenced by Western culture. Thus, Ora’s agency reflects Western values. Moreover, Ora argued that the SHRM best practice model has improved the workers’ workplace lived experiences in Nigeria through better incentive packages. Ora posited that the benefits of the SHRM best practice model includes pension schemes, medical allowances, overseas training and the provision of official cars with chauffeurs. Further benefits include car loans and personal loans to workers at reduced interest rates. In addition, some participants contended that the SHRM best-practice model is sometimes driven by Nigerian socio-structural factors. For instance, many participants highlighted the provision of staff buses for workers in Lagos, Port Harcourt and Abuja because these cities are known for congested traffic.

“My bank provides a lot of benefits.... They give us cars and drivers. Also, my bank provides overseas training in London, Dubai etc. More importantly, I think the salary is competitive in the banking industry...this is all part of best practice to retain talent” (Luru, Group Head, Internal Audit, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 37).

Luru’s quote exemplifies how the SHRM best practice model can improve the workers’ lived experience through better incentive packages and staff training in Warranty Bank. Besides, some banks offer workers crèche facilities either in the head office or in a nearby facility. According to Wunmi, an Assistant Banking Officer in Warranty Bank, there is a provision for nursing mothers to feed their babies during working hours. Wunmi highlighted that nursing mothers are also allowed to resume work late or finish early.

“We have a crèche... You are allowed to drop your children off and feed them. I leave at a convenient hour because I am a nursing mother. As a nursing mother you are allowed to come in one hour later than other people” (Wunmi, Assistant Banking Officer, Internal Audit, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 28)

Wunmi’s quote demonstrates that using the SHRM best practice model, Warranty Bank supports its female workers with babies. Although, a few participants have still criticised some of the best practices in that the SHRM model does not go far enough to improve workers’ lived experience. In cases of death in service, Mola, a Branch Manager in Fancy Bank, argued that banks offer paltry compensation in cases of death on the job.

“Talking about dying on the job, they just give you paltry pension like ₦20,000 (£70) or ₦15,000 (£52). Your relations will struggle to get the cash as it is from the pension fund” (Mola, Branch Manager, Fancy Bank, Lagos, Male, 37)

Furthermore, Hamzah also complained that there are no life insurance policies in place for workers in Fancy Bank, especially, in Northern Nigeria where there are security concerns because of religious and inter-tribal riots.

“There are no life insurance covers for workers; they have for some tellers but not everyone. In the north, there is no insurance cover for such high risk areas in the country” (Hamzah, Branch Manager, Economy Bank, Sokoto, Male, 47)

Mola and Hamzah’s quotes suggest that there are gaps in the SHRM best practice model practised in Economy Bank in its northern branches. Some participants argued that sometimes there is a misalignment between the SHRM best practice model and organisational need. To illustrate, Ben complained that training policies are sometimes problematic as these are not tailored to the job needs. Ben argued that the training programs are standard and it is intended to demonstrate to shareholders that the workers are trained rather than to achieve the objective of upskilling their workers. Ben, as an example of other workers’ concerns, contended that the training policy is used as a reward tool rather than to bridge any knowledge gaps.

“The training culture is poor. In most cases, where there is training, you will only get information from HRM department that you are going for training. The training is not tailored to your development. It is just a standard training” (Ben, Customer Service Officer, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 34)

Ben’s quote illustrates that the training policies in Warranty Bank do not always address the needs of a job because there is no alignment with the organisational strategies. As a

result, a poorly implemented training program does not always yield the desired result. Furthermore, some participants believed that the best practice approach is not really the best for some banks. For example, Omowale contended that the SHRM best practice model is merely copied from Western countries with little adaptation to the Nigerian socio-cultural contexts.

“We are copying SHRM policies lock, stock and barrel from the West and they are not factoring any Nigerian traditions or socio-cultural issues. They say it is best practice without considering if the best practice is the best for the country or the organisation. There is no consideration for African thoughts or trying to do things in a Nigerian manner” (Omowale, Assistant General Manager, Group Head Retail Products, UBP Bank, Lagos, Male, 43).

Omowale’s views illustrate the importance of contextual structures and socio-cultural factors in UBP Bank. More importantly, Omowale highlighted the importance of some Nigerian workers’ agency in implementing the SHRM best practice model. The argument here is that the workers’ agency is socially constructed by contextual culture which may consequently shape workplace productivity. Omowale’s argument highlights the concern that some workers’ values are driven by traditional norms and these values may sometimes conflict with Western values. According to Omowale, Nigerian culture and social structures are unique, such that Western policies cannot be readily imposed without modifying SHRM best practices. Additionally, Jay suggested that even when some banks want to consider socio-cultural factors, the overriding financial pressure and competition ultimately shapes the SHRM model. Jay believed that some banks are not making enough effort to formally address socio-cultural factors.

“Banks have profit-driven approach to everything [...] the CEO wanted to be known as an innovator and somebody who was breaking boundaries in a lot of positive ways. He will be intrigued by new ideas and there might be some scope, but at the end of the day, it was all about doing things in a way that will drive efficiency and productivity” (Jay, HR Consultant, UBS Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

Jay’s quote conveys how the SHRM model does not always address contextual challenges apart from that of business profits in UBS Bank. Thus, UBS Bank is not matching SHRM policies with the workers’ agency which is driven in many instances by Nigerian socio-cultural factors. It is important to match the SHRM policies to the workers’ agency because some participants view the SHRM best practice model as ‘unrealistic’. For example, Chichi argued that the SHRM best practice model is developed by people who

do not understand the Nigerian business and socio-cultural environments. Chichi suggested that because these policies are written for different cultural settings, they become problematic when trying to fit them into the Nigerian social structures and cultural contexts.

“Some of the unrealistic policies they call SHRM best practice that has been formulated by people that are not on ground here and your performance is tied to it. You know we like to follow the ‘white man’s system’” (Chichi, Business Manager, Almond Bank, Lagos, Female, 36)

Chichi’s quote demonstrates the views among some participants that SHRM best practice model does not always achieve the desired results because any of the contextual factors have not been considered. Chichi’s quote also suggests that in some instances, the SHRM best practice is enforced on workers without the workers’ input. However, it is important to note that in some banks, the workers contribute to designing the SHRM model in their organisations. For example, some participants contended that their banks publish draft SHRM policies on their organisation’s Intranet webpage to solicit comments. Thereafter, the workers’ suggestions and opinions are incorporated into the SHRM policy document.

“For example, they sample workers’ opinion on certain things once in a while so they publish draft SHRM policies on the Intranet and ask for feedback.” (Joseph, Group Head Financial Controller, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 41)

As illustrated above, by providing feedback on a draft SHRM policy document, a few participants feel that certain socio-cultural contemporary issues are considered and addressed. However, according to some participants, due to resource constraints and poor the training of managers, there is a gap between SHRM rhetoric and practice. Some participants argued that some banks have comprehensive SHRM policies, but minimal support structures to effectively implement them. For example, Shola posited that some banks have an SHRM policy which addresses equal employment opportunities. However, Shola insisted that most Nigerian banks have not invested in infrastructures for disabled workers.

“Banks will tell you that there are equal employment opportunities. The truth in practice is that Nigerian banks are not structured to support any disabled person. Unlike in other countries, where someone can use a wheelchair to move around or someone can use Braille. For instance, a laptop with Braille does not exist in this bank” (Shola, Assistant General Manager and Head, Product and Segment Management, Keys Bank, Lagos, Male, 41)

The quote suggests that the SHRM best practice model in Keys Bank does not always support the disabled worker's workplace lived experience. Thus, it can be suggested that some banks are not predisposed to recruiting disabled people as they have not invested in the appropriate support structures. For example, Nike, an Electronic Business Manager in Warranty Bank, maintained that some banks occasionally employ one or two disabled individuals to demonstrate that they have a diverse workforce and to comply with equal opportunity employment. More so, Nike argued that with poor support facilities, the disabled employees are unable to work effectively.

"Banks do not give any special accommodation preference during interview. There is no disabled access. There is no disabled car park. There is no disabled toilet or disabled workstation. Banks try to get one or two disabled people so that they will not be seen as discriminating but as complying with employment law. Their numbers are so low and they screen them out during interviews" (Nike, Electronic Business Manager, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

The quote demonstrates poor engagement with disabled workers' needs which makes the SHRM best practice model ineffective. In particular, Nike's views illustrates how some banks comply with Nigerian employment law by employing one or two disabled people, but not investing in structures that will improve the disabled workers' productivity. Some participants argued that the gap observed in Warranty Bank is because traditionally, it is family members who cater for disabled relatives, as illustrated in Ben's views below.

"You know traditionally every family cater for their disabled member.....the managers are not giving them any special support. They are seen as a burden to managers" (Ben, Customer service Officer, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 34)

Ben's quote suggests that with changing family structures in Nigeria, disabled individuals are now seeking waged employment. While some banks strive for a diverse workforce, the managers' thought processes are still 'deeply cultural'. Hence, according to Ben's quote, managers see disabled workers as a burden on their time and resources. Ben further argued that most disabled individuals are deselected during the recruitment stages.

"Disabled individuals have been screened out of the recruitment process, vacancies are not advertised in Braille newspaper, no special access, no disabled car park etc" (Ben, Customer service Officer, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 34)

Ben's quote suggests that the deselection process starts with no job vacancies advertised in Braille newspapers and with no special accommodation allowances during pre-

employment testing or screening process. Ben's quote further implies that some disabled people are not given any equal opportunity during the recruitment stages. By the same token, SHRM practices are different from policies because sometimes the supporting structures are missing or due to cultural nuances which are embedded in the subconscious thoughts of some Nigerian managers. For example, Okene, a Deputy General Manager in Economy Bank, posited that although some Nigerian banks impose the SHRM best practice model on their workforce however, socio-cultural factors always influence the interpretation and implementation.

"Same with policies on disabled people, banks adopt Western best practices policies but the actual practice is different because we are Nigerians and our culture always play a part in everything we do, same can be said of managers in banks" (Okene, Deputy General Manager, Economy Bank, Lagos, Female, 41)

Okene's quote illustrates the effect of the Nigerian socio-cultural context as a major factor in shaping the SHRM model in Economy Bank. It is important to note from the quotes above in this section that the participants expressed diverse opinions on how some Nigerian banks are actively using the SHRM model to address contemporary issues. Thus, further discussions are required to illustrate how some Nigerian banks address contextual issues using the SHRM best fit model. Therefore, to do this, the next section will present the participants' perceptions and lived experiences of the SHRM best fit model.

7.4 Workers' Perceptions of the SHRM Best Fit Model: Employees' Agency and Lived Experiences

The aim of this section is to present and analyse the data on the participants' perceptions of the SHRM best fit model. This section presents the findings on how workers use their agency to shape the SHRM best fit model and how it in turn influences the participants' lived experiences within their socio-cultural environment. The aims of this section are achieved by analysing the participants' quotes. The justification for this section is to bring to focus the importance of the broader socio-cultural lifeworld factors on the SHRM model in Nigeria. According to some participants, some Nigerian socio-cultural values influences the workers' workplace lived experience because the interpretation of SHRM policies is sometimes left to some managers who have been influenced by contextual norms, as illustrated by Mola's comments below.

“[.]..Sometimes how the managers interpret the policies is influenced by their background. Many Nigerians and workers alike have traditional and religious views” (Mola, Branch Manager, Fancy Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

From Mola's quote, some traditional and religious beliefs are embodied in some workers' values and beliefs. Therefore, according to Mola, Fancy Bank strives to align their workers' values with the SHRM model through the best fit approach. However, according to some participants, some banks do not always properly align the SHRM model with cultural factors because of other social structures, such as industry-specific issues and regulatory environments. An example of this perception is as follows.

“Banks strive to achieve person-organisation culture fit for motivation at work, workers' retention etc. However, there are aspects that are congruent with workers' values and there are areas of dissonance. The high level of resignation in banks indicates a misalignment of these values and SHRM” (Luseg, Regional Coordinator, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 37)

From Luseg's quote, Warranty Bank's attempt to align their workers' values with organisations' culture is problematic. Luseg's views suggest that a misalignment between organisational cultures and workers' values result in a lack of motivation and high resignation rates. Most participants contended that the financial objectives of some banks sometimes take overriding precedence over SHRM policies, leading to a problematic misalignment between organisational and workers' values. An example of this view is illustrated below.

“Workers' values are not aligned [...].because the primary objective of best practice is to improve financial objectives...workers have a lot of cultural baggage” (Isy, Group Head, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

Isy's quote maintains that some workers' values are largely shaped by various Nigerian sub-cultures while the Western SHRM model is aligned with organisational financial objectives. On the contrary, Tricia, the Head of Corporate Banking in UBS Bank, believed that the three major tribes (i.e. Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba and Ibo) in Nigeria influences some aspects of organisational and workers' cultures. Tricia argued that the three major tribes are influential in some banks because most banks operate in the main regions in Nigeria.

“I have the privilege of working in the three major tribal regions of Nigeria and thus, I have met diverse tribes at work. The truth is that no matter the strength of the organisation's culture in place, individual's perceptions and behaviours are

still significantly framed by the environment. You will see a lot of honesty and naivety in the North, aggression and industry in the East, service etiquettes and hard work in the West” (Tricia, Head of Corporate Banking, UBS Bank, Lagos, Female, 39)

Tricia’s quote illustrates how Nigeria’s sub-cultures sometimes influences the workers agency and lived experiences as well as organisational structures and cultures. Tricia’s views also suggest that some regional cultural variances demonstrate how no single sub-culture predominates in Nigeria. Therefore, 42 out of the 53 participants posited that organisations should be more proactive in ‘fitting’ the Nigerian socio-cultural context into the SHRM policies. For example, Jay expressed that due to poor alignment between the SHRM model and some Nigerian cultural values, the managers’ interpretations and implementations are usually influenced by their cultural beliefs. This viewpoint is illustrated in Jay’s comments below.

“[...] Whether there will be socio-cultural considerations taken consciously within SHRM policies, I will say no. The policies are written by people who had very deeply engrained beliefs. Nigerian is definitely a place where you brought all your baggage to the office” (Jay, HR Consultant, UBS Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

Jay’s comments suggest how the SHRM best fit model is due in part to workers’ agency, value systems and intersubjectivity rather than due to a well-articulated SHRM policy alone. More importantly, Jay’s views demonstrates how some workers’ thought processes are influenced by some Nigerian socio-cultural factors, and that these in turn may shape the SHRM model. Similarly, Luseg argued that some banks do not intentionally include socio-cultural factors in their SHRM model. However, he contended that the Yoruba concept of ‘*omoluwabi*’ (e.g. value of hard-work, honesty, personal integrity and respect for self) is prevalent in the working environment of some south-western Nigerian banks. Most participants shared Luseg’s viewpoint, but suggested that a reason for the prevalence of Yoruba cultural values maybe due to the presence of most banks’ head offices in Lagos. More so, some participants argued that most SHRM policies are produced in the banks’ head offices and implemented in other branches across Nigeria. Luseg explained this viewpoint further below.

“I am not aware of Nigeria’s cultural values in SHRM policy documents, but I see daily the exhibition of the concept of ‘omoluwabi’ based on Yorubas’ values of respect, hard work, honesty and integrity. All tribes bring certain values to the workplace, but you will see more of Yorubas’ values at work because over half of

the banks are in South-west and many of the framers of the policies live in and are mainly from South-west” (Luseg, Regional Coordinator, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 37)

Luseg’s quote demonstrates how the SHRM model in Warranty Bank is influenced in practice by the different sub-cultural values from various tribes in Nigeria. Furthermore, Luseg’s quote suggests that sub-cultural nuances such as the ‘*omoluwabi*’ values of respect, hard work, honesty and integrity influences the workers’ agency and lived experience. Some participants contended that socio-cultural influences are so prevalent in some Nigerian workplace that some banks actively consider culture in designing the SHRM model. An example of this perception is illustrated below in the comments of Abdul.

“Banks consider Nigerian cultural values when designing best practices. It is best practice when it takes care of cultural factors.... It is just communicated and implemented discreetly using circulars, memoranda, unwritten rules etc” (Abdul, Assistant General Manager, Fancy Bank, Lagos, Male, 47)

Abdul’s quote suggests that the process of communicating and implementing the SHRM best fit model may be very discreet in some banks. In addition, Abdul suggested that Fancy Bank uses different communication mediums, such as circulars, memoranda or informal (unwritten rules) to manage ‘sensitive’ contextual issues. Consequently, contextual socio-cultural factors are treated as addenda and not part of the main SHRM policy documents. This discreet practice may be perceived as a poor implementation of the SHRM best fit model by workers in some banks. However, Omowale posited that his bank take socio-cultural factors into consideration when developing the SHRM best fit model. Omowale also argued that managers, like him, are involved in drafting the SHRM best fit policies.

“There is consideration for social and other soft issues. So, let me just say that it is a balance of everything. Workers and senior managers like me are consulted and we provide input to the SHRM policy” (Omowale, Assistant General Manager, Group Head Retail Products, UBP Bank, Lagos, Male, 43)

Omowale’s quote demonstrates that UBP Bank workers and managers are actively invited to use their agency to shape SHRM practices. For example, participants who work for Keys Bank argued that due to some contextual factors, Keys Bank gives their workers special incentive packages called ‘spouse and children allowance’ under a special family allowance package. 5 out of the 6 participants from Keys Bank posited that special family

allowance is paid due to long working hours and the strain that this puts on a workers' family life.

"[...] in Keys Bank we have what is called spouse and children allowance policy. This policy came up because a lot of people work late and sometimes it tends to affect the home front. So the bank worked-out compensation where the spouses and the children have their own allowance. The allowances are paid by the bank directly into their account" (Tayo, Head Treasury Operations, Keys Bank, Lagos, Female, 36)

The quote illustrates how the Key Bank addresses contextual issues such as family financial demands through the use of additional compensation packages. Some participants argued that special family allowances ensure that a worker family's financial needs are catered for. Additional incentive packages highlighted by the participants include Christmas gifts (usually food stuffs) and a thirteenth month salary system. Although some participants complained that these incentives are only paid during Christian festivals in December, yet little is done during Muslim and other religious festivals.

"Banks pay extra salary called thirteenth month in December – January to help with expenses. Most Nigerians, especially the Ibos travel to their villages during this period to be with their families and they have to take gifts home" (Olale, Foreign Subsidiaries Coordination, Keys Bank, Lagos, Male, 42)

Olale's quote further illustrates how Keys Bank addresses socio-cultural issues around family expectations and festive celebrations through incentive packages. From Olale's comments, it appears that the incentive package of Keys Bank is biased towards the Christian Ibo workers, however, all employers are paid. The situation here is that, with financial support to address financial demands from families and relatives, workers will be more dedicated to their work. Thus, Keys Bank is trying to fit SHRM policies with context. However, the process of trying to fit SHRM policies into Nigerian culture has been criticised by some participants who took the view that banking is foreign to Nigeria. For that reason, only certain aspects of Nigerian culture should be infused into the SHRM model. This viewpoint is illustrated by Ben's quote below.

"The whole banking system is foreign to our culture and adapting it to our environment will be appropriate. However, there are different cultures and the geographical complexity of Nigeria will make it difficult. We cannot wholly take

everything as I do not think our culture has all the features of banking” (Ben, Customer service Officer, Warranty Bank, Lagos, Male, 34)

Ben’s quote advocates that incorporating some aspects of Nigerian socio-cultural factors will improve the implementation of the SHRM model. Furthermore, Ben contended that the cultural and geographical complexity of Nigeria makes it difficult to have a best fit approach that fits all of the various socio-cultural groupings in the country, but it is a better situation than if no attempt had been made at all. By the same token, Lola believed that local traditions can work well when it is added to SHRM policies. However, Lola cautioned that not all aspects of the Nigerian traditions should be added as it may become counter-productive by alienating some workers from the minority tribes.

“If a manager wanted to keep you working late, he will invent all sorts of ‘oriki’ (i.e. praise song) for you. Just to encourage you to keep working. Some ‘oriki’ were funny; it took away the pressure of working. I also had another manager who coined an ‘oriki’ word to encourage us during cash counting. I later imbibed that style of leadership. I think our traditions still have relevance in SHRM policies” (Lola, Branch Operations Manager, Apple Bank, Lagos, Female, 42)

Lola’s quote demonstrates that some Apple Bank workers’ agency can be improved using Yoruba concepts. As a consequence, improving the Yoruba workers’ perceptions of their workplace lived experience. However, Oye, a Branch Operations Manager in UBS Bank, posited that Yoruba tradition like ‘*oriki*’ works well when the workforce is culturally homogeneous.

“Things like ‘Oriki’ work well when you have only Yorubas in the workplace. I think it is a hybrid, international dimension with local focus. For example, they try to lay emphasis on basic SHRM principle like training, manpower development, etc.” (Oye, Branch Operations Manager, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 48)

Oye’s quote illustrates that since most workplaces in Nigeria are tribally diverse, ‘*oriki*’ may not work as some tribes do not have the same concept in their traditions. Furthermore, Oye’s quote suggests that the challenge is to harmonise local traditions with the SHRM model in order to motivate workforce through social inclusion. Consequently, Oye’s quote emphasizes the belief that UBS Bank practices are a hybrid of the SHRM best practice model infused with local norms. Many participants share Oye’s view that a combination of the SHRM best practice model and a best fit model will work best because most Nigerian banks have subsidiaries in other countries. Some challenges of implementing a SHRM best fit model based on a particular Nigerian value system (i.e.

‘*oriki*’) alone may not be acceptable to all tribes within the country. Moreover, some participants who work for Nigerian banks with subsidiary branches in other countries have criticised the impracticality of the SHRM best-fit model in the host countries. However, Adegbo, a Group Head of Operations in Frazer Bank, believed that a SHRM best-fit model in Nigeria will fit well in other African countries as they share similar cultural values with Nigeria. Adegbo insisted that he has never had any tradition-related complaints from subsidiary companies despite supervising Frazer Bank’s domestic and international operations for over five years.

“[...] they are African countries who share some cultural similarities. Gambia is a small country. Most things we do here is what we export to them. They do not resist them because they are our subsidiary and Nigeria is like a big brother to other African countries. Whatever we say is final” (Adegbo, Group Head Operations, Frazer Bank, Lagos, Male, 50)

Adegbo’s quote illustrates the transferability of the SHRM best fit model from Frazer Bank in Nigeria to subsidiaries in other African countries. It can also be argued from Adegbo’s quote that Frazer Banks do not adequately consider the host country’s unique culture before exporting its SHRM best fit model.

However, some Nigerian banks actively engage with the host country’s culture. For example, Omowale, an Assistant General Manager in UBP Bank, argued that Economy Bank (his former employer) operated a centralised SHRM best-fit model based on 33 African member offices. He contended that socio-cultural factors designed into Economy Bank’s SHRM policy reflect broader African societal contexts. Omowale suggested that the 33 African countries are divided into 6 clusters for policy formulation. Furthermore, he suggested that in formulating policies, many cultural issues arise and more importantly, the colonial experiences and heritage of African countries where Economy Bank has offices. Omowale reiterated that a SHRM best-fit model based on Nigerian socio-cultural context alone may not address all of the issues confronting other African countries.

“An employee can be transferred from Nigeria to Zambia to do a particular job. The first thing that my bank looks at is where the person is coming from. For instance as a Nigerian, we will do well in some African countries as we are seen as naturally very aggressive people. There are some countries that the bank will not send a Nigerian worker because they know that he/she will not be culturally

compatible” (Omowale, Assistant General Manager, Group Head Retail Products, UBP Bank, Lagos, Male, 43).

Omowale’s quote demonstrates that Economy Bank attempts to transfer their SHRM best fit model to other African countries through a process of trans-vergence. Also, it can be inferred from Omowale’s quote that the Economy Bank workers’ lived experience is not homogeneous, but shaped by their individual country’s colonial experience. Thus, some participants argued that it is not always easy to find a SHRM best fit model that will work in all African countries. For example, many participants contended that a SHRM best fit model developed for a Nigerian socio-cultural context may conflict with the norms in some francophone countries in West Africa. Temi recalled that in her bank, there are instances where the Nigerian CEO has been recalled to Nigeria due to a poor cultural fit in the host African country. Furthermore, Temi suggested that most times, the host country gets involved in workplace issues.

“One of my staff was transferred to Ghana as a manager. He gave a Ghanaian worker an official assignment to do during his lunchtime. The Ghanaian worker told him that it is his lunchtime and that he is going home to see his family. The Nigerian manager made an issue of it and he wanted to sack the Ghanaian worker. The government stepped in and the Nigerian manager was transferred back to Nigeria. In Nigeria, people work first, they do not complain” (Omowale, Assistant General Manager, UBP Bank, Lagos, Male, 43)

The quote above raises an important point relating to the role of the SHRM best fit model in managing work ethics in UBP Bank. Most participants who experienced both the SHRM best practice and best fit models believed that the models have done little to address employee exploitation and human dignity. Some participants highlighted that there are no employment tribunals and that the judiciary systems are not efficient in handling employee issues. Oye contended that what really matters is for banks to treat their workers with respect and dignity.

“It is down to dignity. Mutual respect for individual workers can go a long way. Workers do not always want to be praised, but people want to be respected. Everybody wants his dignity preserved” (Oye, Branch Operations Manager, UBS Bank, Lagos, Male, 48).

Oye’s quote illustrates that some banks need to go beyond the SHRM best fit model in order to adequately address their workers’ needs. However, Jay believed that respect for

the workers can be resolved through taking a critical look at some of the local Nigerian traditions.

“I think Nigerians are particularly strange when it comes to their own culture. Nigerians revere things from the West. So thinking at ways of getting everybody down and to start exploring who we are as a people and our own cultural value and start to try to tease that into a way of working will be something that will be looked at really suspiciously” (Jay, HR Consultant, UBS Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

Jay’s quote suggests that the SHRM best fit model provides an opportunity for managers to explore how the national culture can be formerly incorporated into a way of working. In addition, Jay’s quote creates the impression that the best fit approach may reduce the current friction between the societal norm and corporate cultures. However, she was sceptical that this approach may fail because some of the workers may be suspicious of anything that has to do with local traditions. Furthermore, she posited that some workers view policies from the West as the best and the culture of reverence for money and power may make it impossible to achieve a best fit that will work for Nigerian organisations and their workers as illustrated in the quote below.

“Nigerians revere money, social status and power. So, to discuss incorporating culture into a SHRM model will be farfetched...we need to develop a SHRM best fit model that supports our management style based on workers’ cultural values and thought processes, this will help Nigerian banks with subsidiaries abroad” (Jay, HR Consultant, UBS Bank, Lagos, Female, 37)

Jay’s quote illustrates the UBS Bank workers’ perceptions of the SHRM best fit model. Moreover, Jay’s quote highlights the need to develop a SHRM best fit model based on the Nigerian workers’ agency and socio-cultural values. However, to develop a SHRM best fit model based on Nigerian social structures and cultural values, the workers’ collective agency and intersubjectivity will need to be actively engaged to co-create a model that is acceptable to all. Thus, Jay’s quote suggests that some of the Nigerian banks venturing into international markets, aligning and utilising their workers’ agency, will be a crucial success factor and a source of competitive edge in the foreign territories. Therefore, the way that the banks harness their workers’ collective agency and intersubjectivity to achieve organisational goals will be of critical importance. To achieve organisational goals and to harness their workers’ collective agency, managers need to improve their workplace lived experience.

7.5 Summary

The main aim of this chapter was to discuss the workers' views on how the workers' agency, social structures and cultural factors shapes the SHRM best practice versus best-fit arguments in Nigeria in order to help answer research questions two and three. The chapter's aim was achieved by presenting and analysing the data on the workers' perceptions of how their banks link organisational strategies to the HRM model, thereby closing the gap on the workers' workplace lived experience. From the findings in this chapter, it can be seen that there are diverse opinions on the nature of SHRM in Nigerian banks. Some participants believed that their banks were practising the SHRM best practice model which converges with Western practices in order to adopt better incentive packages and working conditions. However, some workers contended that their banks were practising the SHRM best fit model due to the diverging contextual social structures and cultural factors which influences both the workers' agency and organisational strategies. A few participants who work for banks with international branches expressed a trans-vergence view in which SHRM best-fit model based on prevalent indigenous traditions were transferred to other African countries. Overall, most of the participants' comments suggested that the SHRM rhetoric was different from practice due to social structures and cultural factors which frames the participants' agency. Largely, the participants advocated that their banks should proactively incorporate elements of Nigerian sociocultural values into their SHRM model in order to improve the participants' productivity and lived experiences.

Having presented and analysed the findings, it is important to discuss the findings in order to address the three research questions which will complete the overall aim and objectives of the study.

DISCUSSION CHAPTER: NIGERIAN WORKERS' 'LIVED EXPERIENCES' UNDER THE HRM AND SHRM MODELS

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss, in a broader context, the findings in Chapters Six and Seven using the extant literature and how these findings validate, augment and advance the existing research on the workers' lived experiences under the SHRM model in Nigeria. Moreover, the three research questions outlined in Section 1.5 in Chapter One and re-iterated at the end of the literature review chapters will be discussed based on the research findings, and the research findings will in turn confirm and advance the existing literature. Furthermore, addressing the research questions will ensure that the aim and objectives of this current thesis is achieved. The aim and objectives of the thesis is to explore the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences under the SHRM model using a phenomenological framework. That is, how the Nigerian workers 'make sense' of their work-world and lifeworld by using their agency to influence the structures and the cultures within their environment and how in turn, these structures and cultures shapes their perceptions, intersubjectivities and lived experiences. It is presupposed that the Nigerian workers' perceptions of social reality is influenced by their thought processes and behaviours which is shaped by the cultures and the structures in which they work and live in. By achieving the main aim, this study addresses the gaps in the sphere of SHRM in Nigeria using a phenomenological paradigm.

To achieve the purpose of this chapter, the Chapter has been organised into three sections in order to further analyse, interpret and explain the research findings. In Section 8.2, the research questions will be addressed using the data gathered from the workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experiences and lifeworld. To adequately address Section 8.2, the three research questions will be addressed in sub-sections 8.2.1, 8.2.2 and 8.2.3. Finally, a summary in Section 8.3 will help to articulate the main discussions in the chapter.

This phenomenological study was designed to investigate the workplace lived experiences of Nigerian workers in their lifeworld and hence the next section presents the discussions that address the three research questions. Addressing the research questions will ensure that the research aim and objectives are achieved, and that the current understanding of Nigerian workers' lived experiences under the SHRM model is advanced.

8.2 Revisiting the Research Questions

This study of Nigerian skilled bank workers' perceptions of their lived experiences under the SHRM model is guided by three research questions. The three research questions were designed to close the gap on our understanding of Nigerian workers' lived experience under the SHRM model. The data collection methods from the fieldwork of this current study were able to provide detailed data which will help to answer the three research questions.

8.2.1 Research Question One

To what extent does the HRM model in Nigerian banks affect the skilled workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experiences?

This question is important because organisational as well as contextual structures and socio-cultural norms shapes the HRM model and the workers' lived experiences which consequently influences the agency of the skilled Nigerian bank workers. According to Ratner (2000), the workers' agency creates a social reality through interactions, actions and their perceptions of the structures and cultures in their social lifeworld. The workers' agency encompasses both the choices that they make and all of their endeavours within the lifeworld (*ibid.*). The Nigerian workers' social lifeworld is principally their organisational and societal world of lived experiences (Anakwe, 2002; Rich *et al.*, 2013). That is, it is the everyday world in which the Nigerian workers live and experience pre-reflexively, through their day-to-day interactions and endeavours (Van Manen, 2007; Rich *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, studies by Ahiauzu (1984) and Nzelibe (1986) demonstrated that the HRM model in Nigeria was influenced by the workers' attitudes and behaviours, which were shaped by the workers' lived experiences and societal lifeworld. Findings from some of the participants' corroborated with Ahiauzu (1984) and Nzelibe (1986) assertions that the HRM model in Nigeria varied depending on how actively the workers used their agency. Some participants suggested that there may be a value shift, in that some Nigerian banks are embracing Western values and practices and this implies convergence approach.

Mufune (2003) contended that the convergence debate posits that work orientations are not mainly influenced by national structures and cultures, rather that work orientations are the behavioural tendencies that workers have towards their intersubjective relationships with other workers through the workers' collective agency and shared values. Jackson *et al.* (2008) also argued that it is not easy to explain what constitutes an indigenous HRM

practice due to the European colonial experience in African countries. In fact, some negatively perceived HRM practices could be post-colonial practices which have converged with the values' system of the European colonial administrators (*ibid.*). Anakwe (2002) also asserted that major organisations in Nigeria have dominant foreign HRM models which converge with Western practices. The changes in the HRM model in Nigeria to the more prevalent Western practices has led to changes in work arrangements with consequences on the workers' agency, perceptions, and lived experiences which have become Westernised (McGee, 2012; McMahon *et al.*, 2014). Anakwe's (2002) arguments that the HRM model in Nigerian banks was partly convergent with Western values are supported by findings in this study. Some of the participants argued that their banks design their HRM policies based on Western values and that these policies are usually imposed on workers. Indeed, the findings revealed that most participants believed that Nigerian value systems are treated as exceptions when developing the HRM model in their organisations. Most times, as the findings suggest, the participants' views are not taken into consideration when designing the HRM model, with unfavourable consequences to the agency of the workers. Some Nigerian HRM scholars (e.g. Ahiauzu, 1986; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Nwagbara, 2012) argued that Nigerian employers appear receptive to the Western HRM model in order to improve organisational efficiency, corporate governance and the workers' lived experiences. In particular, the findings suggested that some Nigerian banks may have adopted the Western HRM model in order to close the gap in employment law. Thus, findings showed that some banks look internationally for best practices. Adeleye (2011) observed that Nigerian banks had started adopting new employment patterns such as outsourcing, sub-contracting, franchising, short and long-term temporary working schemes, fixed-term employment contracts and independent or self-employment contractors. The findings suggested that a number of Nigerian banks may well have evolved its HRM guidelines based on Western policies in areas such as contract working and outsourced workers. Furthermore, a few participants believed that their banks changed to more temporary employment types (e.g. outsourcing and sub-contracting) as a cost saving measure. Some participants who work in the HRM department of their banks contended that employers determine the strategic direction of the HRM model and not the HRM professionals. Hence, the findings suggested that a few employers do not see their workers as long-term assets, but as temporary and disposable assets instead. This viewpoint can be inferred from the findings. Cornelly, a Branch Operations Manager in UBS Bank, argued that the lack of legal

framework to manage outsourced workers puts them at risk of impromptu dismissal, relatively low wages and limited career options. Many African scholars (e.g. Khan and Ackers, 2004; Ayittey, 2010; Kamoche, 2011; Nwagbara, 2012; Jackson *et al.*, 2014) and the findings suggested that some aspects of the Western HRM model is perceived negatively (e.g. applications of sanctions and dismissal) because of the way that they are implemented in a number of banks in Nigeria. The findings confirmed that most participants did not feel that they contributed to shaping the HRM model because the employers were focused mainly on financial gain with an inadequate emphasises on workers' welfare.

Khan and Ackers (2004) posited that the Western HRM model is not always an appropriate theoretical guideline for evaluating all of the relevant social structures and cultural factors that influence the workers' agency and workplace lived experience in sub-Saharan Africa. Due to the importance of culture on the workers' collective agency and intersubjectivity, numerous seminal papers have been published such as Hofstede's (1980) five cultural dimensions, Trompenaars' (2005) cultural groupings and Tayeb's (1988) seven cultural characteristics. Extant literature (e.g. Ayittey, 2010; Awolusi *et al.*, 2015; Abdulazeez *et al.*, 2016) identified cultural issues as one of the most challenging factors in implementing the HRM model successfully in Nigeria. In fact, the Western HRM rhetoric brought attention to alternative social structures and cultural realities rooted in indigenous traditional structures based on local cultural values and the workers' perceptions of their societal lifeworld (Khan and Ackers, 2004). The findings suggested that even when a few banks developed Western HRM policies in theory, in practice, it is different due to, for example, the participants' collective agency and intersubjectivity. According to Nyambegera *et al.* (2001), workers are a product and a reflection of childhood experiences because of family upbringing, religious creed, traditions, and forms of education with all of the associated values and belief systems that influence behaviour and expectations. It is therefore imperative to consider the contextual social structures and cultural factors that shape the participants' workplace lived experience under the HRM model. There are suggestions that the Nigerian societal norms are so enduring that they may influence foreign organisational culture and structure through the participants' lived experiences (Akpan and Akpaetor, 2013; Muogbo, 2013; Awolusi *et al.*, 2015; Abdulazeez *et al.*, 2016). This study observed the central and enduring role of cultural factors in implementing a HRM model in Nigerian banks through the participants'

comments. Throughout the research fieldwork, this study gathered data relating to contextual cultural factors, but due to time and space, a selection of some of the key themes will be discussed such as respect for age, views on corporate dress, the culture of group orientation and social exclusion.

Firstly, the findings in this current study confirmed the observations of existing HRM writers (e.g. Emeti, 2012; Awolusi *et al.*, 2015; Abdulazeez *et al.*, 2016) in that Nigeria is a hierarchical society where a lot is ascribed to social status and seniority by age of birth. Eze (2006) and Emeti's (2012) studies were based on a positivist paradigm and hence identified the important role of seniority by age. They made suggestions that it should be included in the HRM model. The findings in this study support the cultural importance of seniority by age of birth and the need to address it through the HRM frameworks. Moreover, this study went further by uncovering some possible underlying reasons as to why it was adopted through the participants' views. The findings suggested that participants view the use of first names as foreign and an unacceptable Western norm imposed on workers. The findings also proposed that the use of first names was adopted by some employers of the newer banks in Nigeria to bridge cultural and communication barriers. Furthermore, the findings revealed that the use of first names by some workers started with a few employers who set up new banks with colleagues of the same age brackets; hence it was easy to adopt the use of the first names in order to address one another. The findings suggested that the use of first names served its purpose during the formative years of the banks. Moreover, the findings demonstrated that despite its widespread use in the workplace, participants argued that it as an unacceptable practice in wider society. It can be inferred from the findings that participants want their banks to revert to the traditional ways of showing respect to older colleagues which involves using a title before names. For example, Jay, a HRM Consultant in UBS Bank, suggested that cultural hierarchical ruling is deep-rooted in the agency of the Nigerian workers. As a result, some managers responsible for implementing the HRM model often end up enforcing traditional values. Notably, the findings implied that some participants have improvised ways of calling senior colleagues by using titles and part of their first names thereby avoiding using their first names only, suggesting a cross-vergence approach.

Secondly, findings from this study demonstrated that some Nigerian banks have adopted the Western dress code of a shirt, tie and suit in their Lagos offices. The findings also illustrated that from the participants' perceptions, some employers have imposed Western

dress as a best practice in order to ensure uniformity in dress code as the different tribes in Nigeria have different tribal dress codes. According to the findings, a few religious and cultural factors are considered sensitive issues and thus, in many cases, employers adopt the best practices which are perceived as neutral. The controversial topic of corporate dress code was a key finding in this study, where some participants believe that Western corporate dress code ensures that workers are viewed as professional and respected by people in general. Some participants interviewed criticised the adoption of Western dress codes due to its lack of fit for the Nigerian climate. For example, the findings showed that some participants argued that with high temperature levels, wearing a suit and tie posed a health risk. Consequently, the findings suggested that most participants preferred wearing their traditional dress at work. Prominently, this study observed the differences in the approaches to bank dress code between the southern and northern states in Nigeria. Most participants argued that Western dress code is common in the southern states of Nigeria, while traditional dress codes is the norm in the northern states. In addition, the findings revealed that in recent years, some Nigerian owned banks have been relaxing their policies on Western dress code by allowing employees to wear their traditional clothes on Fridays.

Thirdly, societies or organisations that promote collectivism emphasise group work and expects that the group will take care of its members (Stonehouse *et al.*, 2004). Hofstede's (1980) work identified Nigerian and other West African countries as being collectivist societies. More importantly, this thesis has explored the perceptions of participants on why tribalism or favouritism is enduring in Nigerian banks. The findings in this regard can be broadly divided into two; first is the traditional concept of extended family, clan and kinship and secondly, is the interference of the HRM model processes by some external stakeholders. The extended family life structure is core to the family units and social groups in Nigeria (Awolusi *et al.*, 2015; Abdulazeez *et al.*, 2016). However, the findings from this study suggested that while the extended family could still be important, members of the larger social groups may be changing from the traditional clansmen, peer groups and clans-women to political, religious, professional and social clubs. Some participants in this study suggested that in addition to financial demands, members of the extended family also expect the participants to help with employment of their children and/or other family members, either within the same organisation or in other organisations where they have contacts. According to African HRM literature (e.g. Nyambegera *et al.*,

2001; Khan and Ackers, 2004; Kamoche 2011), this trend has been observed widely in Africa and the authors of the literature called for more inclusive policies by African organisations. This trend of social exclusion has been described as tribalism (Nyambegera *et al.*, 2001). Some HRM literature (e.g. Inyang, 2008; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Awolusi *et al.*, 2015; Abdulazeez *et al.*, 2016) suggested that tribalism is a major problem in Nigerian banks. From the perceptions of the workers gathered in this study, some banks tend to have more employees coming from a particular tribe or socio-cultural group than others. The findings suggested that members of the same tribe are perhaps systematically favoured during selection, and also during career progression within the organisation. Furthermore, the findings suggested that government, political, religious and traditional institutions also influence employment processes as these institutions are viewed by participants as rich sources of business opportunities for some banks in the form of cash deposits. To gain more business opportunities offered by these institutions, some banks, according to the participants, may need to recruit members nominated by the institutions in return. Consequently, as long as some Nigerian banks are dependent on cash deposits as their main source of revenue, they may inadvertently import the group orientation from the society into the organisations.

Anakwe (2002) posited that the Nigerian workplace reflects a blend (cross-vergence) of Western practices driven by the organisation's corporate culture and strategy, and indigenous practices driven by the social structures and cultural norms of the society. Thus, Nigerian workers have to use their agency to balance the conflicting and demanding socio-cultural expectations and work commitments (*ibid.*). Moreover, the findings suggested that some participants' believe that their collective agency and intersubjectivity ensures that both convergence and divergence HRM practices co-exist in some banks. The adoption of Western and/or traditional HRM practices depends on what contextual structures and cultural issues the banks are addressing. Evidence from the participants' views revealed that some Nigerian banks actively transfer their HRM model to subsidiaries in other countries, suggesting a trans-vergence HRM model. The participants' agency sometimes makes implementation difficult due to their social-cultural values which sometimes comes in to conflict with the culture of the host country.

Summarising the discussions in this section, it was established from the participants' perceptions that both Western best practices and contextual norms influence some Nigerian skilled workers' agency, intersubjectivity and workplace lived experiences. As a

result, to answer research question one, it can be argued that from some participants' comments that the HRM model in Nigerian banks affects the skilled workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experiences. Therefore, this paragraph concludes the findings on the effect of the HRM model in Nigeria on the lived experiences of the Nigerian workers. The discussion will progress to addressing research question two in the next sub-section.

8.2.2 Research Question Two

To what extent does the SHRM model in Nigerian banks affect the skilled workers' perceptions of their work-life lived experiences?

The importance of the second research question stems from the need to understand how the workers' perceptions of their work-life balance and workplace lived experiences is framed by both organisational and societal structures, and cultural factors. The findings in Chapters Six and Seven suggested that SHRM provisions may influence some of the participants' lived experiences under the SHRM model and consequently, their work-life balance. From a phenomenological viewpoint, individuals perceive the lifeworld before experiencing it and in the process of 'making sense', they use their agency to shape the lifeworld. This agency consequently shapes their lived experiences (Van Manen, 2007; Giorgi, 2008; Finlay, 2009; Anosike *et al.*, 2012). In turn, the lived experiences then changes the individuals' perceptions and worldviews which then alters the individuals' process of 'making sense' (Finlay, 2009). The totality of agency and the lived experiences of the individuals form their phenomenological experience (Anosike *et al.*, 2012). It is important to mention that despite the challenges that participants reportedly face daily in their organisations and in their lifeworld, the participants have exercised their agency in different ways to manage the situation. Adisa *et al.* (2014) argued that balancing workplace and lifeworld lived experiences are an important aspect of the SHRM model in Nigeria because it affects the workers' agency which invariably affects productivity. Moreover, according to Odle-dusseau *et al.* (2012), the two realms of work and lifeworld overlap, and are mutually dependent on one another in shaping each other as such that agency, feelings, attitudes and behaviours from one domain is transferred to the other domain. This thesis is an exploratory experiential study which has gathered a lot of insight and knowledge on the workers' work-life lived experience. However, the most common recurring themes such as long working hours and the heavy traffic situation in Lagos sometimes impacts on their family lives negatively. The recurring themes are discussed further below. Furthermore, the management literature (e.g. Adisa *et al.*, 2014; Fapohunda, 2014a) has highlighted how bank workers start working very early in the

morning and stop late at night; the publications focused on stress-related issues and the effect on family life without revealing the underlying reasons.

The findings suggested that some participants believed that the improper work arrangements by some Nigerian banks and lack of adequate policies on closing time has contributed to the workers' long working hours. More specifically, most participants suggested that some banks have a resumption time, but no closing time. To illustrate this viewpoint, Yoad, the Head of Oil and Gas in Keys Bank, posited that the SHRM model in Keys Bank has inadequate provisions for work-life balance problems. In particular, the long working hours affects some Nigerian workers' ability to fulfil their family and societal responsibilities. Thus, many participants suggested that reducing the long working hours may improve the workers' lifeworld as well as their workplace experiences. The findings demonstrated that the workers are frequently expected to report to work on Saturdays and Sundays without additional compensation, and that these additional hours are not included in their employment contracts. According to the findings, the long working hours are sometimes due to the organisational and contextual cultural factor. For example, some participants commented that when they finish work for the day, they cannot leave work before their manager leaves. In other words, some participants remain at their workstations 'pretending' to work until their managers leave for the day. According to participants, some banks recognised the long working hours' impact on workers' family time and thus, implemented measures to compensate the workers' families. For example, a number of workers in the Keys Bank posited that a special family allowance is paid directly to the workers' spouses and children's accounts to compensate them for the strain that this puts on workers' family life. Some banks provide incentives around Christian festive occasions such as Christmas gifts (usually food stuffs) and a thirteenth month salary paid around January. The findings also suggested that additional financial supports provided by a number of Nigerian banks to their workers helps to address the financial demands from families and relatives, thus the workers are motivated to work more.

The findings from some participants inferred that the long working hours may be due to several issues of which traffic congestion is a factor. The traffic congestion problem in Nigeria was reported by participants based in the main cities, particularly in Lagos. This viewpoint possibly explains why it is a recurring issue among the participants. Some participants who are based outside of Lagos also complained about the growing traffic

problems in their area as well. Most participants suggested the inadequate and poor road infrastructures are some of the contributing factors to the traffic congestion problem. Some participants argued that the extra hours spent in traffic contributes to the long working hours of bank workers. For example, another possible reason for long working hours is that some workers deliberately try to avoid rush hour traffic by staying back at work until the traffic subsides.

According to the participants with young families, long working hours affects their ability to make proper arrangements for child care. In addition, some participants suggested that different socio-cultural expectations within the different tribes in Nigeria places demands on women which are different from those of men. This observation is supported by the existing literature of Ituma *et al.* (2011) which suggested that Nigerian cultures and social structures are designed based on the roles of gender, in which men are socialised to become breadwinners and women are encouraged to engage in domestic work as homemakers. Thus, in many Nigerian tribes, the upbringing of children is a woman's responsibility (*ibid.*). From the findings, some participants suggested that when women from Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa tribes are married, they are usually solely responsible for the children's upbringing, in particular, taking children to crèches, organising nannies and employing housemaids to assist with domestic tasks. To illustrate this argument, some female participants based in Lagos believed that leaving their children with nannies, in crèches or utilising other support networks could result in an unpleasant impact on the family life. In addition, the findings gathered that due to unfavourable economic situation in Nigeria, more women in southern Nigeria are joining their husbands to seek waged employment in banks. This finding supported the earlier suggestion by Fapohunda (2014b) that it is not uncommon to find both men and women working and both contributing to family income. The findings also suggested that while managing the home front and keeping a full time job is demanding, some southern Nigerian women now have a voice at home. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated through the participants' perceptions, waged employment has given southern Nigeria women the financial leverage to contribute to important decisions in the home. The findings suggested that in situations where women earn more than men, some husbands are willing to engage in some domesticity such as looking after the children, while women are away on official assignments. However, the views of the Yoruba and Ibo male participants suggested that nothing much has changed in their world as long as their working wives continue to

recognise their status as 'head' of the family. This finding from the Yoruba and Ibo male participants supports earlier reports by Eze (2006) and Ituma *et al.* (2011) that men are socialised to become breadwinners and women are encouraged to engage in domesticity. Furthermore, the findings suggested that Southern Nigerian men who cannot share in domestic chores, ask their wives to look for employment in public establishments because they consider public employment to be less stressful and the working hours are shorter. For example, Adenugba and Ilupeju (2012) argued that Nigerian women in the past have worked in socio-culturally acceptable employment such as nursing, teaching, catering and secretarial jobs which were as an extension of their traditional and domestic duties. More so, the findings revealed that women from the Yoruba and Ibo tribe believed that they are judged by their marital success and not by their career success within the Nigerian socio-cultural context. Hence, the findings illustrated that due to socio-cultural demands and marital obligations, many women workers from the various tribes in Nigeria appear to be opting out of bank work and sometimes out of waged-employment altogether to focus on bringing up their children.

Khan and Ackers (2004) contended that due to economic reforms and sociocultural changes in the society, African men have been forced to take up waged employment without the system providing support for women, children, elderly and non-working men. Khan and Ackers' (2004) view is further corroborated in this study, as the findings indicated through the participants' perceptions that long working hours and changes in family support for children is affecting the workers work-life balance and lived experiences. Furthermore, Akanji (2013) and Fapohunda (2014b) argued that women in Nigeria traditionally raise children under the supervision of an immediate extended family member, but economic pressure now forces women to work in waged employment in order to provide financial support to the family. Many participants argued that in the past, their parents left them with their grandparents but now, they cannot do the same because some of their parents are still working. Due to late retirement age in recent times, working families in Lagos have resulted in looking for alternative childcare support systems. To demonstrate this argument, Ora, an Ibo female participant, posited that workers are now adopting alternative childcare support systems such as crèches, nannies and house-helpers. According to Akanji (2013), women are saddled with a role overload leading to situations where family obligations come into serious conflict with work demands. For example, the findings showed that many southern female participants are worried about the fact that

they do not have enough time for their children because of the long working hours and traffic congestions which implied that their children spend more time with nannies. To illustrate, Tayo, a Yoruba female participant, warned that leaving children with nannies is not always good for family life. Tayo's warning stemmed from the expected socio-cultural role of women where women are socialised to bring up children with cultural values. Furthermore, the findings revealed that some available crèches' opening hours do not always adequately support the long working hours and travelling times of bank workers. Consequently, many Lagos working couples in the banking industry resorted to making compromises in order to take care of the children. In an attempt to ensure that children are given adequate parental care and support, one of the parents usually has to give up his or her job to take care of their children. In many instances, according to participants based in Lagos, it is the working women that give up their jobs as men are seen as the 'head' of the family in the Nigerian social-cultural context. The findings asserted that most men in Lagos ask their wives to resign bank work and seek alternative employment in government establishment. The perception of Lagos-based men is that the resumption and closing times is flexible in government establishments. The findings also demonstrated that the male participants ask their wives to work in industries like consulting firms where the working schedule is perceived to be less demanding and more flexible. The study also shows that a few of the male participants asked their wives to resign employment altogether in order to take care of the children on a full time basis. The findings suggested that when some women marry or have children, they tend to resign their bank jobs and seek other forms of employment. According to the participants, some southern Nigerian women resigned because of the expectation of keeping the home front together in addition to waged employment. Thus, the findings suggested that some Yoruba women believed that they are not judged by their professional achievements, but by their ability to bring up their children and keep the family unit together.

Drawing from the arguments so far, Lagos-based women believe that their agency is shaped by societal expectations and marital obligations based on the contextual cultural norms and organisational structures influenced by provisions of the SHRM models. According to Fajana *et al.* (2011), a combination of workplace and personal life lived experience challenges affects women's agency. This study advances Fajana *et al.*'s (2011) argument by suggesting that there are some women participants who have transcended the challenges of organisational and national structures and cultures by using their agency to

achieve successful careers and marital bliss. Furthermore, it was observed from the findings that the SHRM model in Nigerian banks influences the participants' lived experience. Consequently, to answer research question two, the SHRM model in the Nigerian banks affects the skilled workers' perceptions of their work-life lived experiences. In summary, in addressing research question two, it is important to note that there are inadequate SHRM provisions as the participants have to make tough choices, in particular, some Lagos-based women resigned due to the long working hours and family demands. It is noteworthy to say that possibly while some Nigerian banks provide financial support to the participants' families, the SHRM provisions may not provide enough support from the participants' perceptions of their work-lifeworld needs. It is also observed that the provisions of the SHRM model do not adequately, in some cases, address the socio-cultural issues which impacts on the participants' workplace lived experiences such as not closing before the manager leaves the office for the day.

In conclusion, it can be implied from the existing literature (e.g. Abdulkadir, 2012; Emeti, 2012; Muogbo, 2013) that linking organisational strategies to HRM policies infers a strategic choice. The strategic choice involves how best to implement the SHRM model in Nigerian banks. The findings suggested that SHRM choices usually involve adopting Western best practices or a more contingent best fit approach. Thus, discussing the extent to which the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences are affected by organisational strategies under the SHRM model will help address research question three.

8.2.3 Research Question Three

To what extent are the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences affected by organisational strategies under the SHRM model?

Research question three helps to close the gap on our understanding of the factors that influences the participants' workplace lived experience. The current arguments on the HRM model in Nigeria have focussed on the role of contextual socio-cultural factors and Western best practice. This thesis has taken this discussion further by linking the convergence, divergence, cross-vergence and trans-vergence debates to organisational strategies using the existing SHRM framework. However, the existing SHRM model does not provide an adequate explanation as to how organisations utilise their human resources to achieve their organisational goals (Awolusi *et al.*, 2015; Abdulazeez *et al.*, 2016). The process by which organisations employ their human resources to achieve organisational

goals shapes their workers' lived experience and agency (Emeti, 2012; Muogbo, 2013). From a phenomenological approach, the findings - according to some participants' perceptions - suggested that the SHRM model in some Nigerian banks influences their lived experiences. More specifically, the extant literature (Emeti, 2012) and study findings illustrated that in many instances, the organisational structures and cultures shapes the SHRM model which in turn influences the participants' lived experience. The phenomenology paradigm of this study assumed that the workers' behaviours are a product of how they perceive and interpret their work-world (Bryman, 2012). Hence, the work-world of the Nigerian workers will be comprised of organisational structures and cultures influencing the SHRM models which are reflected upon by the workers (Van Manen, 2007). The workers' workplace day-to-day lived experiences are thus influenced by the agency of the workers themselves and the organisational structure and culture, and the interactions of the three dimensions (Husserl, 1964; Finlay, 2007; Anosike *et al.*, 2012; Bryman, 2012).

According to Boxall and Purcell (2011), the SHRM model provides a strategic frame which is concerned with longer-term workers' issues and macro-concerns about structure, quality, culture, values, commitment, and matching resources to support long-term organisational goals and outcomes. The findings suggested that some Nigerian banks have an SHRM model in place. The findings also suggested that the participants' views differed on how the SHRM model is implemented across the banks. This observation goes against the literature of Inyang (2008) and Olufemi (2009) who argued that there is no SHRM model in Nigerian banks. The difference between the findings in this study and Inyang (2008) and Olufemi's (2009) literature may be because of the phenomenological approach of this thesis which has emphasised on a qualitative data gathering method using the workers' perceptions rather than a quantitative approach as used by the earlier literature. Another possible explanation could be the timing of Iyang (2008) and Olufemi's (2009) studies, as more recent Nigerian SHRM literature (e.g. Adenuga and Ilupeju, 2012; Adegoroye and Oladejo, 2012; Akanni and Ekundayo, 2012; Emeti, 2012; Akpan and Akpaetor, 2013; Muogbo, 2013) has suggested that there are SHRM models in Nigerian banks. It is important to mention that some of the participants criticised the effectiveness of the SHRM model, but notwithstanding, they all argued that some Nigerian banks have implemented the SHRM model. The findings demonstrated that linking the SHRM model to organisational strategies could infer strategic choices.

Strategic choices in turn determine how best to implement the SHRM framework - this is the root of contention between the advocates of the best fit and best practice models (Boxall and Purcell, 2011). By the same token, the SHRM model provides a valid reference to study how the convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence debates links to organisational goals using the best practice and best fit models.

The findings showed that some participants differed on their perception of the SHRM model in their organisations, that is, whether their organisations are practising SHRM best practice or the best fit framework. The findings suggested that some of the banks' have a main goal which is financial, and that the SHRM model and organisational strategies are aligned to help the banks achieve this goal. A number of the participants argued that contextual matters are considered by their banks to be too complex to manage due to the multi-tribal make-up of the Nigerian workforce. Some participants were critical that even when organisations want to consider socio-cultural issues, the overriding financial pressure and competition eventually shapes the SHRM model instead. Thus, some of the participants suggested that the SHRM best practice approach may be the best option for managing workers in some banks. The participants, who share the convergent view, contended that all workers should be managed to common international standards in order to ensure transparency, fairness and to improve the working conditions. Existing SHRM studies (e.g. Anakwe, 2002; Eze, 2006; Emeti, 2012; Muogbo, 2013) argued that Nigerian organisations adopted the SHRM best practice model to attract the best talents in the country in order to be competitive. This study's findings confirmed that some Nigerian banks, according to participants, adopted the Western SHRM best practice model in order to attract and retain talent. The participants highlighted that some SHRM best practices provisions include a competitive salary, pension schemes, medical allowances, official cars with chauffeurs, subsidised car and personal loans, overseas training, three months maternity leave with full salary, the provision of a crèche within the office building and reduced working hours for nursing mothers. The findings suggested that some Nigerian banks attract skilled workers in the country due to the implementation of these competitive incentives. However, the findings also suggested that there are still gaps on how many participants are treated under the SHRM best practice model. Some areas of the participants believed the banks could improve by including better health and safety standards and the provision of a more robust insurance policy for customer-facing workers especially in restive areas in the country. Furthermore, the findings suggested

there are still gaps in the implementation of the SHRM best practice model such as instances where overseas training is used as a reward mechanism rather than to improve the participants' skill sets. Some participants complained that training programmes are not always tailored to meet the job requirements and that organisations tactically arrange training and other business engagements on weekends. Thus, the findings suggested that the SHRM best practice model may not be the best for Nigerian banks, taking into consideration its socio-cultural context. Correspondingly, leaving out the social structures and cultural norms from the SHRM model may be deemed as a denial of contextual realities. The findings implied that despite the best intentions of some Nigerian banks to implement a SHRM best practice model, in practice, some socio-cultural factors will always frame the interpretation and implementation of the SHRM model. The existing literature (e.g. Khan and Ackers, 2004; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009) also confirmed that Nigerian workers have deeply rooted cultural values and that these indigenous customary norms influences the agency of the workers and managerial actions. A key argument uncovered in the findings is that some Nigerian banks should possibly adopt the SHRM best fit model because in most cases, the implementation of the SHRM model has been delegated to the managers. The findings gathered that since interpretation and implementation of SHRM policies is left to the discretion of individual managers in a number of cases, the SHRM policies inadvertently end up with cultural undertones. Furthermore, some of the participants implied that managers introduce their own world view during the interpretation of the SHRM policies. To illustrate this viewpoint, Lola, a Branch Operations Manager in Apple Bank, argued that typically workers cannot finish work for the day before their manager. This is an unwritten policy in Apple Bank which is effectively understood by most workers because Nigeria is a very hierarchical society. Furthermore, the findings suggested that the intersubjective relationship between the managers and their workers is sometimes governed by socio-cultural values and norms. It can be suggested that the relationships between the managers and workers is very critical as such that if the relationship deteriorates, some of the participants reported that it might result in bullying and the harassment of the concerned workers. It was gathered that the workers believed that they have limited options if their managers bully or harass them as the formal organisations' grievance procedure is perceived by some of the participants to be unfair. The findings based on the participants' comments suggested that during the grievance procedure in their banks, employers tend to support their managers against their workers. Moreover, the findings gathered that employers' rely on the managers to

interpret and implement SHRM best fit policies, thus this implies observable inconsistencies across the banks leading to the participants' perceptions of poor fit between SHRM policies, and organisational strategies and workers' workplace lived experiences.

According to the findings, the adoption of the SHRM best fit model in Nigerian banks may be influenced by organisational goals. The extant SHRM literature (e.g. Adigun, 1995; Anakwe, 2002; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Ajila et al., 2012; Emeti 2012; Akpan and Akpaetor, 2013; Muogbo, 2013) suggested that in Nigerian banks, the cross-vergent debate and the SHRM framework is a best fit model. The findings also suggested that there are some contextual socio-cultural values which are practised in the SHRM model. This study advances the discussions on how some Nigerian banks engage with socio-cultural factors by presenting the participants' perceptions. Some participants suggested that what appears to be a lack of engagement with contextual features is indeed actively addressed through the use of circulars or memoranda, or allowing prevalent socio-cultural practices to continue. The findings suggested most banks, either through written policy or through the use of memoranda and circulars, have adopted elements of these socio-cultural norms in their SHRM practices. An example is the observed traditional concept of '*omoluwabi*' and '*oriki*' in some banks in Nigeria. In other words, for SHRM policies to fit better with banks' strategies and objectives, the participants suggested that banks need to take a proactive approach in formally recognising some socio-cultural factors influencing on the SHRM practices. The findings also suggested that socio-cultural factors should be recognised in the main SHRM policies and not in the addenda, circulars or memoranda. This would ensure that the managers are aligned on how they should be managing contextual issues. Some participants warned that the challenge is that the diverse cultural make-up of Nigerian workforce makes it difficult to have a SHRM best fit approach that 'fits' all of the various interest groupings in the country. From the findings, a way out of the diverse cultural issues was proposed by Lola, a Branch Operations Manager in Apple Bank; local traditions can work well when infused with the SHRM model, but banks may need to be selective in the norms adopted as it could be counter-productive. The findings suggested that local Yoruba traditions (e.g. *omoluwabi* and *oriki*) are used by managers in Lagos to motivate workers. In addition, the findings suggested that the various tribes in Nigeria contribute different cultural traditions to the SHRM best fit model in the banks. Furthermore, evidence from the fieldwork

suggested that some banks allow dress down, though this is usually restricted to Fridays in the South. North-based participants have more flexible religious and traditional clothes, and provisions for prayer times compared to the southern-based participants. The findings implied that some divergent practices could be a reflection of some of the banks' strategies. For instance, the findings revealed that some banks employ individuals from certain religious and traditional institutions with the aim of gaining access to cash deposits from the institutions. Thus, the workers recruited from these institutions will bring with them the religious and the traditional values expounded by their organisations into the banks' working environment. According to the findings, the religious and traditional values sometimes influence the banks' SHRM model and workers' lived experiences. As discussed earlier in this section, some banks formerly align the religious and traditional values to organisational strategies through the use of memoranda or circulars, while others allow the religious or traditional values to be moderated by social interactions. Emeti (2012) suggested that the problem with the SHRM best fit model is that there is no theoretical model for managers to follow, hence it does not provide a structured approach to SHRM implementation. The findings suggested that there were varying opinions as to what SHRM policy the banks set out to formulate and implement. From the findings, the opinions varied amongst the participants as to whether Nigerian banks are practising a SHRM best practice model or SHRM best fit model, but in practice, one can infer a blend of best practice and best fit.

It is implied from the discussions so far in this section that organisational structures (e.g. the SHRM model and organisational strategies) and contextual social structures and cultural factors may affect the agency of workers and the perceptions of their workplace lived experience. It can be argued that organisational strategies are designed to achieve business goals, however the processes of implementation shapes the agency of participants and their intersubjectivities. Many participants in turn use their agency to design and implement organisational strategies. As a result, to answer research question three, the workers' lived experiences is influenced by organisational strategies under the SHRM model. Furthermore, the extent to which the worker's lived experience is affected by organisational strategies varies among workers. To illustrate, some workers use their agency to contribute to the design and implementation of organisational strategies while some workers are unable to use their agency as their employers impose organisational strategies on them. Thus, by discussing the extent to which the workers' perceptions of

workplace lived experiences is affected by organisational strategies under the SHRM model, this section concludes the discussion on the research questions.

Drawing from the discussions in this chapter, addressing the three research questions has helped to close the gap on our understanding of the Nigerian workers' lived experiences under the HRM and the SHRM models. The existing literature has overemphasised the role of organisational structures and national cultures in shaping the debates around HRM and SHRM models with a limited focus on the lived experiences of workers. The three research questions have given a 'voice' to the workers and thus, placed the workers at the centre of debates around the HRM and the SHRM models. As the supplier of 'meaning' to the social structures and cultures that shapes the debates around HRM and SHRM models, it was deemed important to solicit the workers' perceptions. Using a phenomenological paradigm, the debates around the HRM and SHRM were placed within the workers' lived experiences and by doing so, provided an insight into how workers actively use their agency to construct the HRM and the SHRM models and how in turn, the SHRM and the HRM models shapes the workers' perceptions of their lived experiences. Thus, achieving the research objectives: 'to evaluate how a phenomenological framework can be used to understand Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experience under the HRM and the SHRM models' and 'to understand how theoretical dimensions of structure, culture and agency affect Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived'. Lastly, by addressing the three research questions, this study has been able to meet the aim of this research which is to explore the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences under the HRM and the SHRM models.

8.3 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to discuss in a broader context the findings in Chapters Six and Seven using extant literature and how the findings validate, augment and advances existing research studies on the workers' lived experiences under the SHRM model in Nigeria. The aim of this chapter was achieved by addressing the three research questions. By addressing the three research questions, the thesis has provided a deeper and richer understanding of the workers' lived experiences under the HRM and the SHRM models in Nigeria. Addressing the three research questions has also ensured that the aim and objectives of this thesis was met by exploring the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences under the HRM and the SHRM models. Thus, the discussions in

this chapter have also illustrated how the agency of workers interacts with the organisational and social structures, and cultural factors to shape the workers' lived experiences within their work-world and lifeworld.

In furtherance of the above discussions, the thesis progresses to the next chapter which provides a conclusion to this thesis. In addition to presenting the key contributions, potential future study and concluding summary, the next chapter reflects on the aim and objectives of the research and some closing thoughts.

CONCLUDING CHAPTER: KEY CONTRIBUTIONS, AREAS OF FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Introduction

The overall aim of this thesis was to explore the Nigerian skilled workers' agency and perceptions of their lived experiences under the HRM and the SHRM models identified in Chapter One, Section 1.5. To achieve the overall aim, two research objectives and three research questions were identified. A phenomenological paradigm and the three theoretical dimensions of structure, culture and agency were proposed to guide the literature review and methodology. Subsequently, the methodology informed the research method and strategy which led to the gathering of the participants' perceptions of their lived experiences both in their workplace and in their broader lifeworld. The findings from the fieldwork combined with extant studies were used to address the two research objectives and the three research questions. By so doing, the overall aim was achieved. After achieving the overall research aim, this concluding chapter therefore will progress to highlighting the key contributions to the stock of knowledge in Section 9.2. More so, this study has contributed to advancing and closing the gap on our understanding of the HRM and the SHRM models in Nigeria using a phenomenological paradigm. Moreover, this study touched on some key issues which necessitate further study. Hence, in Section 9.3, further areas of research will be highlighted before assessing the research limitations in Section 9.4. It is important to discuss the research limitations because of the phenomenological paradigm and the design of this study which has influenced the interpretation of the findings. Thereafter, Section 9.5 presents a critical assessment of the thesis and reflections upon completion before providing some closing remarks in Section 9.6. However, the next section starts with the key contributions of this study as this current study has contributed to the stock of knowledge on the HRM and the SHRM models in Nigeria using a phenomenological paradigm.

9.2 Key Contributions of Study

The main contribution of the study was to address the overall aim of the thesis which was to explore the skilled Nigerian workers' agency and perceptions of their lived experiences under the HRM and SHRM models. Through the process of achieving the overall aim, this thesis has contributed in many ways to the stock of knowledge in HRM and the understanding of the Nigerian workers' lived experiences. Empirical phenomenological research generally entails the return to embodied, experiential meanings aimed at newer,

complex, rich and more insightful explication of a phenomenon as it is experienced or lived by social actors (Giorgi, 1997; Finlay, 2009). Most phenomenological research studies have focused mainly on lived experience studies in areas of psychology, nursing and caring, physical education, indigenous weather forecasting, education and scholarship (e.g. Husserl, 1964; Layder, 1994; Ehrich, 2005; Todres and Galvin, 2006; Makoe, 2007; Van Manen, 2007; Wallqvist and Carlsson, 2011; Muguti and Maposa, 2012). In addition, management writers (e.g. Gibson and Hanes, 2003; Ehrich, 2005; Anosike *et al.*, 2012; Englander, 2012) have called for the use of phenomenology in experiential HRM studies to gather new insights into the study of management, to determine business goals and to explicate the essence of human experience. Van Manen (2007) and Finlay (2009) also argued that phenomenology is gaining more acceptability among management researchers in the study of HRM. Therefore, this thesis has contributed to the use of phenomenology as a theoretical framework in management studies in the following areas:

9.2.1 Phenomenological Methodology in SHRM Study in Nigeria

As discussed above, there have been calls (e.g. Finlay, 2009; Anosike *et al.*, 2012; Englander, 2012) for HRM researchers to use a phenomenological methodological framework to gather new insights into the HRM model. In addition, this exploratory study has demonstrated through the research design, general arguments and the findings, the validity of phenomenology as a methodological approach in SHRM study. This research does not stipulate or claim to provide a guide for the use of a phenomenological methodology in SHRM studies, but rather, it is the hope of this thesis that this exploratory study will be a starting point in advancing the use of phenomenology as a methodology in SHRM and HRM studies in general. Furthermore, one of the benefits of using a phenomenological methodology in SHRM is the first person accounts gathered during the fieldwork which gives the researcher an insight into the lifeworld of participants as experienced by the individuals themselves. Another benefit is that the study places the agency of the social actor (participants) at the centre of the research in assessing how they 'make sense' of the social world and in turn, how the social world shapes their personal and work experiences. For instance, the findings suggested that the HRM policies of banks in Nigeria are linked to organisational strategies and goals but differ on how the HRM policies are linked.

According to Inyang (2008) and Olufemi (2009), there is a gulf between the HRM model and organisational strategies in Nigerian banks. The difference between this study and the

existing literature may be attributed to the phenomenological approach of this framework which has emphasised the agency of the Nigerian workers, their perceptions of their experiences and the rationale for the participants' viewpoints. The findings also illustrated that some workers questioned the effectiveness of the link between the HRM model and the organisational strategies, but notwithstanding, the workers agreed that there was a link. In other words, for the HRM model to fit better with organisational strategies, the findings suggested that Nigerian banks need to take a proactive approach in formally recognising some of the social structures and cultural factors influencing the HRM model. The findings highlighted the cultural and geographical complexity of Nigeria which makes it difficult to have a SHRM best fit approach that fits all of the various interest groupings. A way out of the challenge of integrating social structures and cultural factors to the SHRM model was to selectively infuse some local traditions (e.g. '*oriki*', '*omoluwabi*') that can improve the agency of the workers through motivation. Beyond the benefits of applying phenomenological methodology to a SHRM study, this study also applied phenomenology within management studies in Nigeria. The next section will present the discussions on the contributions of using phenomenology within a Nigerian context.

9.2.2 Phenomenological Methodology in Management Studies within a Nigerian Context

Kamoche (2011) contended that African management practices are under researched and that there are strategic, organisational and epistemological issues when managing workers in Africa. The strategic, organisational and epistemological issues have been addressed in this thesis through the phenomenological paradigm and the findings which has helped to address the three research questions. As argued in sub-section 9.2.1, most SHRM studies in Nigeria have been based on a positivist paradigm. The positivist quantitative studies have addressed, to some extent, the ontology. Thus, there is a gap in the existing literature as to the nature of HRM in Nigeria and how to go about understanding it. Most of the HRM debates have focused on the convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence views. The HRM debates overemphasise the role of social structures, cultural factors and Western practices on the HRM model in Nigeria. Anakwe (2002) argued that to accurately understand the influence of social structures, cultural factors and Western practice on the HRM model in Nigeria, the workers should be asked for their opinion.

As presented in Chapter Five, Section 5.3, the ontological and epistemological issues are addressed by phenomenology through exploring the social actors' perceptions of a social

phenomenon. More specifically, the phenomenological framework addresses the epistemology through the concept of the human consciousness as being intentional, thus, suggesting that the lifeworld is the basis of human agency and social action. The processes of interviewing the social actors (workers) who have experienced a certain phenomenon suggest a first-hand account of the perception of such a phenomenon. Hence, the epistemological issues are addressed by a first-hand account of social phenomenon. The argument here is that the individuals socially construct their reality through their perceptions and actions. In other words, the process of interviewing workers, gathering their perceptions and actions has helped to address the nature of HRM practices in Nigeria. Furthermore, it is important to note Nigerian workers as social actors that socially construct their lifeworld through their perceptions and actions and through the process of their intersubjectivity with other agents and structures. Therefore, the workers' perceptions and actions ultimately shape their lived experiences of a social phenomenon. This viewpoint helps to answer the three research questions which have brought into focus the workers' perceptions of organisational strategies while the phenomenological paradigm has provided an epistemological orientation. Consequently, the phenomenological methodology has provided a starting point for an exploratory study for future research into management practices in Nigeria from the perspective of workers based on their lived experiences. The phenomenological paradigm has allowed this study to gather the workers' perception, thus this is another key contribution which will be presented next.

9.2.3 Exploring Workers' Lived Experiences in Management Studies in Nigeria

A key contribution of this study is the focus on the lived experiences of Nigerian workers under the SHRM model and how the workers interact with social structures, cultural factors and other agents within their work-world and lifeworld. The workers' lived experiences and interactions with structures, culture and agency form the basis of phenomenological research (Husserl, 1964; Finlay, 2007; Anosike *et al.*, 2012). The current study argued that attitudes and behaviours are a reflection of the workers' culture and therefore, the workers' perceptions, thoughts, feelings, opinions and experiences of social phenomena shapes their lived experiences of their work-world and lifeworld. This study also posited that Nigerian workers live in 'two worlds'; the lifeworld of social structures and cultural contexts and the work-world influenced by Western values introduced to organisations through convergent SHRM best practices. It is important to

mention that the concept of the two worlds is not new, as other Nigerian HRM writers (e.g. Anakwe, 2002; Okpara and Wynn, 2008; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Emeti, 2012; Muogbo, 2013) have observed a similar trend. However, what are considered new are the perceptions and opinions of Nigerian workers in the 'two worlds'. Furthermore, this lived experience study has gathered experiential data on Nigerian workers which suggested how the workers use their agency to adjust to the changes in the two worlds and more importantly, how the workers balance the often conflicting demands of said worlds.

This thesis also confirmed Khan and Ackers' (2004) assertion that African workers do not consider waged employment (i.e. the work-world) to be more important than their socio-cultural contextual lifeworld. The findings suggested that workers place their socio-cultural contextual lifeworld above their work-worlds as illustrated by the women participants who have resigned their employment in order to take care of their family. As demonstrated by the findings, society judges Nigerian women not by their career success, but by their ability to raise their children and keep their families together. Like most facets of the workers' lives, workers expect their work demands to fit into the Nigerian cultural context hence, the reasons for some constant tension between the imported Western practices and the enduring indigenous systems. To illustrate this viewpoint, the use of someone's first name to address senior colleagues has been resisted by the workers. As discussed in Section 8.2, Nigeria is a very hierarchical society which ascribes a lot to respect for elders. Respect in the Nigerian socio-cultural context includes not calling elders by their first name. However, the decision of some banks to adopt the use of a first name to break cultural barriers has led to some workers been perceived as rude.

Studying the workers' lived experiences under the HRM and the SHRM models in a multi-cultural society like Nigeria with over 250 tribes with unique cultures provides an exploratory starting point to understand the collective human experiences of a particular phenomenon in the lifeworld. Moreover, according to Kamoche (2011), a multi-cultural approach to studying the effects of culture on management may be impracticable. Also, assuming a single cultural perspective for the 250 tribes in Nigeria may be misleading; hence a phenomenological research of the lived experiences of workers providing the perceptions and opinions of workers on a common social phenomenon is useful. For example, Nigerian sub-cultural studies by Ahiauzu (1984) and Nzelibe (1986) has demonstrated that management practices are influenced by workers' attitudes and behaviours which are culture-bound. In addition, Fajana *et al.* (2011) contended that

Nigeria's socio-cultural diversity has influenced the HRM model in the country through the agency of the workers. Furthermore, the role of social structures, the agency of the workers and cultural factors in shaping the convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence HRM debates has been well documented in Nigerian literature (e.g. Anakwe, 2002; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009). A separate strand of arguments where the HRM model in Nigeria is linked to organisational strategies has been equally documented in Nigerian literature (e.g. Emeti 2012, Muogbo, 2013), framing the SHRM best practice/best fit model. This study has advanced these two studies by suggesting a link as illustrated in the section below.

9.2.4 Advancing Links Between the HRM Debates and the SHRM Models

The main argument in this section is that most of the debates on the HRM model in Nigeria have focused primarily on the role of social structures, cultural factors and the impact of Western policies in achieving organisational goals. The current HRM debates assume that Western best practices help to improve the HRM model in Nigeria or close the gap where there are no indigenous provisions. Jackson (2002) argued that the contemporary HRM debate is based on the pejorative assumption that the HRM model in Africa needs to develop along a Western framework to be efficient. It was observed during the literature review and the fieldwork of this study that the overriding factor in implementing the HRM model was the financial benefits involved. The focus on financial benefits suggested that most banks' resources, including human resources, are arranged and planned in such a way as to meet these goals. From the findings, it became apparent that the plans and how the banks' deploy these resources are well-articulated in Nigerian organisations' strategies. Most banks' strategies are driven by the Nigerian business environment which consists of regulatory frameworks, competitors (both foreign and local), social amenities and the wider socio-cultural factors which influences the financial goals of organisations. It is important to highlight that the organisational strategies of banks are driven by organisational goals which is in turn shaped by the contextual business environment. Both the contextual business environment and organisational strategies involved shapes the workers' workplace lived experiences. Hence, the need to situate the current convergent, divergent, cross-vergent and trans-vergent IHRM debates within the organisational strategies and objectives using the extant SHRM model. As a result, linking the contextual factors in convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence HRM debates to organisational strategies and objectives provides a holistic view

of how the organisational and lifeworld structural and cultural factors has influenced the agency of workers and their lived experiences.

This study also confirmed that the majority of workers interviewed were not happy with the HRM model and wished that their employers could do more to improve the workers' workplace lived experiences. Some of the existing literature proposed that the HRM model in Africa should reflect a cross-vergent approach to harness the best of both Western practices and indigenous norms (Anakwe, 2002; Khan and Ackers, 2004; Okpara and Wynn 2008; Azolukwam and Perkins, 2009; Kamoche, 2011). This study has advanced the discussion and suggested that a cross-vergence debate without an appropriate SHRM framework will not reflect all of the nuances that shape the workers' workplace lived experiences. Hence, it can be inferred that a prudent approach will be a best fit cross-vergence approach (or a best fit trans-vergent approach for banks with subsidiaries abroad) while aspiring for a hybrid best practice/best fit cross-vergence model. Drawing from the discussions so far, it can be inferred that linking the SHRM model and the convergence, divergence, cross-vergence and trans-vergence HRM debates offers a broader explanation of the various socio-cultural factors and organisational strategies that frames worker agency and the workplace lived experience.

In summary, a key contribution of this study is the linking of the debates of convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence HRM to organisational strategies. The findings suggested that Nigerian employers do not prefer Western best practice over indigenous practices or vice versa, but whatever drives financial benefits. The findings also suggested most of the HRM practices are exported to other African countries where Nigerian banks have subsidiaries. This argument infers a trans-vergence HRM practice which will be presented further in the next sub section.

9.2.5 Advancing the Studies of the HRM Trans-vergence Debates in Nigeria

Another key contribution of this thesis is that the findings demonstrated that the HRM model is and can be transferred to the Nigerian banks' subsidiaries in other African countries. Beyond the HRM cross-vergent debates in the Nigerian context, the findings revealed that the HRM model in Nigeria is exported to subsidiaries abroad, particularly to other African countries. There is limited extant literature on the HRM trans-vergence model in Africa and none in Nigeria. Hence, this study represents an opportunity for contributing to the stock of knowledge on the HRM trans-vergence model in Africa, and

is potentially a starting point for similar future research. The findings suggested that many Nigerian banks post consolidation-acquired subsidiaries in other African countries. The workers were critical of the approach of the banks in transferring their HRM model to other countries with inadequate provisions for the contextual factors in the host country. Most of the criticisms by workers were around some of the Nigerian socio-cultural factors which were inadvertently transferred with the HRM model leading to clashes with the host countries' customs. Besides, the findings suggested that some banks have been more successful than others at exporting their HRM model.

This exploratory phenomenological study has advanced our understanding of the HRM and SHRM models in Nigeria. Moreover, this study has also provided insight into the impact of the HRM model in Nigeria when transferred to other African countries through subsidiaries. It is hoped that this study will serve as a starting point for future research in this area of management. This thesis hopes that future research in inter-cultural studies within African states will be a starting point for developing an 'African HRM model' which will present a viable alternative model to the Western HRM best practice debate. Thus, this study has covered areas which will benefit from further inquiry. Some key areas suggested for future investigations are discussed in the section below.

9.3 Further Phenomenological Research On Nigerian Workers' Lived Experiences

A number of issues emerged from this research which deserve further investigation in future studies. In this section of the chapter, the suggested areas for further studies are outlined and presented below.

9.3.1 Feminist Study – Intersectional Perspective

During the study, the findings illustrated the participants' perceptive on gender issues around intersectional perspectives such as tribes, marital status, family obligations and religion. The findings also confirmed that there were fewer women at the level of senior management (see Appendix 3). Furthermore, the present study gathered exploratory data to explain why there is a gender disparity at the senior management level in some Nigerian banks. However, women workers' careers in Nigerian banks should be examined in more detail using a phenomenological paradigm from an intersectional perspective as women are a diverse group. A phenomenological framework will ensure that any future study done on women workers will represent the perspectives and lived experiences of the diverse group that is Nigerian women workers.

9.3.2 Comparative Study

Future investigations will benefit from a comparative study of the banking sector with other industrial sectors of the Nigerian economy. This is important because the Nigerian banking sectors have a different history, regulatory contexts, and different market maturity from other industrial sectors; however the lessons learnt can be shared amongst the various industrial sectors. Perhaps the lessons learnt will highlight the most appropriate way to address the socio-cultural factors and possibly inform of suggested new government legislation.

9.3.3 Longitudinal Study

The timing of this study is also important as the Nigerian banking industry has been subjected to regulatory interventions over time. Two of the most important being the post consolidation of 2005 and the removal of the Chief Executives of five banks in 2008 due to corporate governance issues. These regulatory interventions have led to changes in the HRM model; hence, it would be useful to research the industry over time providing a detailed historical account of the workers' lived experiences.

9.3.4 The HRM Model in Nigerian Banks Abroad

A research study into the HRM model adopted by the Nigerian banks' subsidiaries abroad will provide an insight into how different African cultures blend within organisations. This study should examine within the structure, culture and agency frameworks, where the effects of each dimension could be investigated within a set time period. In this manner, a broader picture of the HRM model in Africa will be explored and the workers' experiences investigated.

9.4 Assessing the Research Limitations

The purpose of this section is to discuss and analyse some of the research limitations common to most social research studies, and in particular, on the empirical phenomenological study type within organisational SHRM. The limitations have discussed mainly the fit between the research methods and the type of data sought to address the research questions, objectives and the overall aim of the thesis. Notably, as presented by Bryman (2012) and Gunu (2009), the population sample of qualitative studies is usually restricted to a small sampling size as the emphasis is not on generalisation, but on an in-depth understanding of social phenomena. With 53 Nigerian bank workers interviewed, the participants represent a cluster of the skilled workforce

who has been exposed to Western education and culture as well as indigenous socio-cultural norms. It is therefore sometimes difficult to distil out what is a tribal cultural practice and what is an imperfectly implemented Western best practice model. Sometimes, it is problematic to separate Western culture assimilated into the broader Nigerian culture from the traditional norms imported into the workplace (Khan and Ackers, 2004; Ayittey, 2010; Emeti, 2012; Akpan and Akpaetor, 2013; Muogbo, 2013). It is particularly problematic to isolate a Nigerian traditional culture as firstly, Nigeria is not a homogeneous tribal entity and secondly, the country has experienced colonial rule which came with Western ideology (Ayittey, 2010; Emeti, 2012).

As discussed in Chapter Five, the phenomenological framework of the thesis is focused on understanding the Nigerian skilled bank workers' perceptions of social phenomena and the underlying meanings behind them. As presented in Chapter Eight, the workers' perceptions and the implementation of the SHRM model in Nigerian banks is influenced by cultural biases and with over 250 cultural tribes in Nigeria, this makes it difficult to infer a generalisation. However, some cultural trends were observed during the findings which suggested general social phenomena such as the concepts of '*oriki*' and '*omoluwabi*' which were commonly observed in the workers' lived experiences. There could be other indigenous cultural concepts in other parts of the country, but the observed trends were reinforced by the social interactions prevailing in Lagos. Despite the various problems and weaknesses associated with social inquiry, qualitative research and the gathering of subjective data, this thesis hopes to have produced a convincing argument for the merits of adopting a phenomenological paradigm as a means of gathering the workers' perceptions, thoughts, feelings and experiences on organisational phenomena in a non-Western context. However, it is important to mention that even a well-designed research strategy and thoroughly executed research fieldwork comes with a range of practical limitations (Bryman, 2012).

The research used purposive sampling and convenient selection techniques for selecting the participants which implies that the majority of respondents are based in Lagos. This study strove to include as many diverse groups of individuals as possible from different regional tribes as well as a representative gender balance in the fieldwork. However, it is the hope of this thesis that future studies over a longer period and across a wider Nigerian geographical setting will result in a larger, diverse socio-cultural group of interviewees. While a future study will benefit from a longitudinal as well as a broader regional study,

the validity of the current studies lies in the fact that most of the banks' headquarters are in Lagos where SHRM policies are formulated and enforced on branches in other states. Most of the participants interviewed have also worked in different states in Nigeria, making the sample size representative of managers in the banking industry.

Apart from the contextual socio-cultural factors' influence on the Nigerian organisations, organisational culture also plays a significant role. As discussed in Chapter Eight, sometimes the organisational culture is not necessarily borne out of the fusion of the broader societal socio-cultural context and the adoption of Western ideology alone, but other organisational objectives. The other organisational objectives observed in the study include business strategies formulated and implemented by banks to achieve their financial goals. It is sometimes problematic separating the socio-cultural issues from Western policies, financial objectives and the business strategies adopted as they can overlap and more importantly, they all affect the workers' lived experiences creating varying degrees of impression on the individual workers. However, to delineate the various factors that can affect the workers' lived experiences, this study has adopted a theoretical framework which recognises the three dimensions of structure, culture and agency. Having said this, the three theoretical dimensions have influenced how the key themes from the fieldwork were clustered. Thus representing one perception of reality, however this thesis recognises other ways of arranging key themes and possibly presenting the workers' perceptions.

Furthermore, as with most qualitative studies, the role of the researcher in a social inquiry is important because qualitative content analysis is reflexive and interactive as researchers continuously modify their treatment of the data to accommodate new data and insights (Bryman and Bell, 2003; Bryman, 2012). Hence, to address this concern, it is imperative for a researcher to identify her/his position in the social research study. Therefore, reflexivity is desired as is a critical assessment of the researcher's influence of the social inquiry process. To address the role of the researcher in this study, the next section will present the researchers' reflections upon completion as well as a critical assessment of the thesis.

9.5 Critical Assessment and Reflections Upon Completion

Upon the completion of this research, it is important to look at how this thesis was conducted. Hence, the purpose of this section is to address some of the key issues that

arose during this research. At the beginning of the research study, I thought it would be interesting to conduct a comparative study of Nigerian workers' lived experience under the SHRM model in the banking industry as well as the telecommunication sector in Nigeria. However, I realised during the fieldwork that it was impractical for me to collect in-depth information on the lived experiences of Nigerian workers in both sectors together; hence the extent of the study was restricted to the banking sector alone. Therefore, I had to trade off the comparison and generalisation that a larger study would provide for an in-depth investigation of the lived experience under a SHRM model. It is pertinent to point out that whilst the workers' perceptions of their workplace lived experiences were studied in eighteen out of the twenty-three Nigerian banks, this study does not claim to be generalisable to other Nigerian industrial or service sectors. However, this study does offer an insight into the Nigerian workers' workplace lived experience in general. Thus, this study advances our understanding of the SHRM model in a non-Western context, and in a previously under-researched area in Africa and in Nigeria in particular. Moreover, when I was investigating the HRM model in Nigerian banks, I did not have access to the policy documents and circulars used to manage socio-cultural factors. Most Nigerian banks had a policy in place of not sharing HRM policy documents with non-staff. The implication of not having access to the HRM policy documents was that I did not have any alternate sources of data on the HRM model and hence, the research depended solely on the workers' perceptions. The HRM policy documents would have provided an independent source, and would have been triangulated with the workers' narratives.

Furthermore, the intention at the beginning was to involve workers from all of the twenty-three banks in Nigeria and from all levels of organisations' hierarchy. However, this was not possible. As the fieldwork progressed; it was increasingly difficult to access participants due to their long working hours and weekend working. Some of the participants cancelled their appointments while some participants could not complete their scheduled interview due to unplanned family commitments; this led to some missed opportunities. All in all, as the interview progressed, it became apparent that the key themes were emerging and some of the participants interviewed had previously worked for the remaining five banks not covered in an official capacity in this survey. An additional concern was that I felt that some of the participants were not as forthcoming in their interview; this sometimes meant very short interviews and hence, limited

information. This was a finding on its own as some of the participants were disengaged with the system and were not keen to talk about their frustrations. In addition, some of the participants asked for a questionnaire but since this was not consistent with the qualitative method, it meant a short interview.

The last point in this section is the role of the researcher as a social actor and the issue of identity; this has been discussed in detail in Chapter Five, but reflected upon here. In line with a phenomenological framework, reality is regarded as internal to the individual actors, thus, the output of this thesis represents just one version of reality. More so, the different unrelated issues may have influenced some of the participants' views. This was visible during the interview process as some of the participants preferred to complain about the economic situation of Nigeria rather than to discuss the HRM model in their organisations. Therefore, I would contend that this study is valid, but at the same time, I admit that this research could have been conducted in different ways with different outcomes, depending on the researcher, the participants, organisations, industry and time of research. Thus, I do not allege one definitive truth as this would go against my methodological framework and phenomenological philosophy.

9.6 Closing Remarks, Summary and Conclusions

The overall aim of this study was to explore the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experiences under the HRM and the SHRM models. To achieve the overall research aim, two research objectives were identified: 'to evaluate how a phenomenological framework can be used to understand the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived experience under the HRM and the SHRM models' and 'to understand how the theoretical dimensions of structure, culture and agency affects the Nigerian skilled workers' perceptions of their lived'. To do this, three research questions were articulated and addressed using the first-hand narratives of participants who have a lived experience of the Nigerian organisational and contextual structures and cultures. Consequently, by achieving the overall aim, this study has successfully offered fresh, exciting and in-depth explanations on the nature of SHRM in Nigeria by exploring the workers' views, thoughts, opinions, perceptions and lived experiences using a phenomenological paradigm. This thesis relied on two key extant literature of convergence/divergence/cross-vergence/trans-vergence HRM debates and the SHRM best practice versus best fit model. An important contribution of this thesis was to link these two unique but key literatures in order to illustrate a more holistic picture of the various

nuances that influences the agency of workers and more so, their perception of their workplace lived experience. The two key literatures of HRM debates and SHRM arguments on their own did not provide an adequate explanation for the various factors that shape the Nigerian workers' workplace and lifeworld lived experiences. The present research transcends these debates by demonstrating how an improved explication for the HRM model can be achieved by acknowledging the interaction and giving equal weighting to the national socio-cultural context, the influence of Western practices and the role of organisational strategies. Thus, this research can be viewed as an endeavour to shed light on how the dynamics of the dialectical relationships between contextual structures and cultures, and organisational strategies shapes the workers' workplace lived experiences.

This research has made an insightful attempt to reveal how workers use their agency when balancing conflicting contextual socio-cultural expectations with Western organisational practices. A key example is the changing structure for childcare support which puts pressure on working parents, particularly Southern-based women who are culturally expected to bring up children. A consequence of the work-life conflict is a reduction in the number of women at the level of middle management upwards due to socio-cultural expectations of being home-makers. Another example was observed during this study in which some of the Nigerian banks recruited a handful of disabled workers, but provided no additional organisational support such as keyboards with Braille. It can be inferred that in many cases, the SHRM rhetoric is different from actual practices and this is partly due to the poor training of managers in supporting the SHRM model and poor engagement with socio-cultural factors in the Nigerian banks.

Finally, a phenomenological framework has been used as a pioneering and an exploratory concept in this study to generate fresh data on the workers' lived experience under the SHRM model in Nigeria in a way that will not have been easily realisable by other means. Therefore, this study has shed light on an under-researched field and filled the gaps observed in the existing literature, offered answers to research questions and proffered one version of reality among many. There is a need for further research to be done on the SHRM model in Nigeria in order to provide a broader picture and an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of Nigerian workers. However, this research can be seen as an in-depth study in this area and it can be used as the foundation for more work to critically explore the views of the workers and how they perceive their world.

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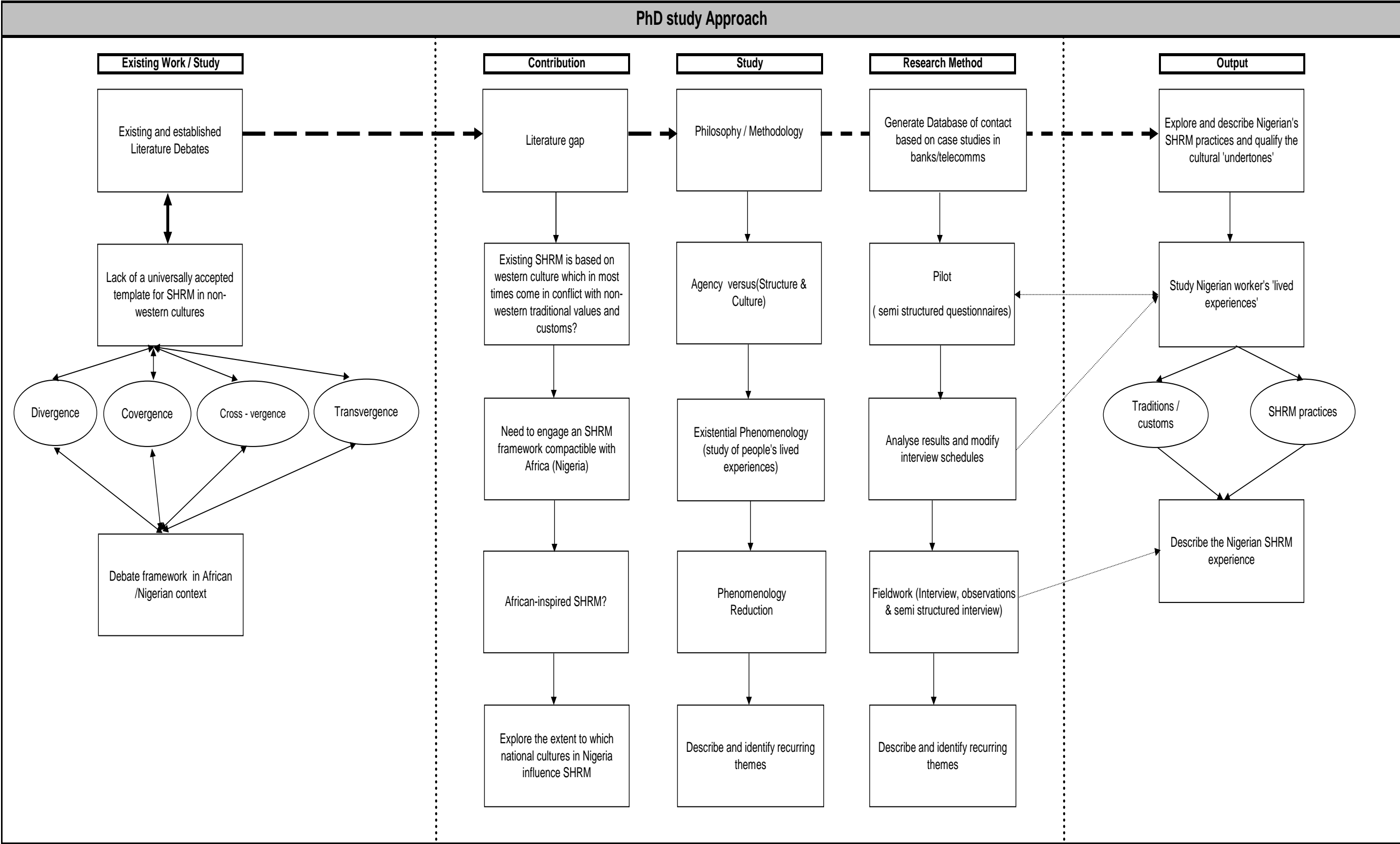
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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – PhD Approach



Appendix 2 – Profiles of Participants

S/N	Organisation	Organisation Ownership	Name	Gender	Age (Range)	Marital Status	Qualification	Religion	Tribe	Position	Industry (Years)	Geographical Location	Interview Dates	Method of Interview (i.e. telephone, Skype, Facetime, Face-to-face)	Length of Interview (mins)
1	Economy Bank	National	Hamazah	Male	47	Married	MSc	Islam	Ebira	Branch Manager	18	North West	7/3/2013	Telephone	55
2	UBS Bank	National	Oye	Male	48	Married	LL.B	Christianity	Yoruba	Branch Operations Manager	8	Lagos	8/4/2013	Telephone	37
3	Keys Bank	National	Yoad	Male	46	Married	BA	Islam	Yoruba	Head of Oil & Gas	10	Lagos	23/03/2013	Telephone	23
4	SBP Bank	International	Sheer	Male	39	Single	PhD	Islam	Yoruba	Group Head, Non-Interest Banking	5	Lagos	3/4/2013	Telephone	42
5	Warranty Bank	National	Ben	Male	34	Married	MSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Customer Service Officer	3	Lagos	4/4/2013	Telephone	33
6	Almond	National	Chichi	Female	36	Married	MBA	Christianity	Ibo	Business Manager	10	Lagos	14/04/2013	Telephone	53
7	UBS Bank	National	Cornelly	Male	41	Married	BSc	Christianity	Isan	Branch Operations Manager	5	Ogun	17/04/2013	Telephone	30
8	Economy Bank	National	Subomi	Male	40	Married	MBA	Christianity	Yoruba	Marketing (Line Manager)	12	Lagos	5/3/2013	Telephone	55
9	UBS Bank	National	Fayo	Male	40	Married	BSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Head of Internet Banking	14	Lagos	9/4/2013	Telephone	50
10	Keys Bank	National	Shola	Male	41	Married	BSc	Islam	Yoruba	Assistant General Manager (AGM)	13	Lagos	22/03/2013	Telephone	33
11	Keys Bank	National	Fem	Male	42	Married	MSc & MBA	Christianity	Yoruba	Business Manager	14	North Central	5/3/2013	Telephone	42
12	Warranty Bank	National	Shiru	Male	33	Married	B. Eng	Christianity	Yoruba	Senior Banking Officer	6	Lagos	14/04/2013	Telephone	30
13	UBS Bank	National	Omowale	Male	43	Married	MSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Group Head, Retail Product (AGM)	16	Lagos	27/02/2013	Skype	50
14	Frazer Bank	National	Adegbo	Male	50	Married	MBA	Islam	Yoruba	Group Head Operations	30	Lagos	10/3/2013	Telephone	54
15	Warranty Bank	National	Doko	Male	32	Single	BSc	Christianity	Igala	Internal Audit Officer	8	Lagos	2/4/2013	Telephone	40
16	Keys Bank	National	Tayo	Female	36	Married	MSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Head of Treasury Ops	13	Lagos	18/03/2013	Telephone	20
17	UBS Bank	National	Jay	Female	37	Single	MSc	Christianity	Ibo	Human Resources Consultant	4	Lagos	3/4/2013	Facetime	23
18	Warranty Bank	National	Luru	Female	37	Married	MBA	Islam	Yoruba	Group Head, Internal Audit	14	Lagos	2/3/2013	Facetime	84
19	Keys Bank	National	Olale	Male	42	Married	MSc	Islam	Yoruba	Head, Foreign Subsidiaries Coordination	15	Lagos	27/02/2013	Skype	74
20	UBS Bank	National	Joseph	Male	41	Married	BSc	Christianity	Benin	Group Head, Financial Controller	14	Lagos	30/03/2013	Telephone	36
21	UBS Bank	National	Ora	Female	43	Married	MSc	Christianity	Ibo	Head Retail Banking Operations	18	Lagos	21/03/2013	Telephone	40
22	Economy Bank	National	Sunil	Male	45	Married	BSc	Islam	Yoruba	Customer Service Manager/Head of Operations	12	Lagos	10/4/2013	Telephone	43
23	Warranty Bank	National	Lyin	Female	30	Married	MSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Internal Control Supervisor	8	Lagos	7/5/2013	Telephone	30
24	Warranty Bank	National	Kale	Female	31	Single	BSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Account Officer	4	Lagos	8/5/2013	Telephone	10
25	Warranty Bank	National	Samuel	Male	35	Married	MBA	Christianity	Idoma	Internal Auditor	9	Lagos	10/5/2013	Telephone	15
26	Warranty Bank	National	Aye	Female	30	Married	BSc	Christianity	Itsekiri	Internal Auditor	5	Lagos	6/5/2013	Telephone	20
27	UBS Bank	National	Gbemi	Male	36	Married	BSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Senior Banking Officer	6	Lagos	6/5/2013	Telephone	20
28	Warranty Bank	National	Gbola	Male	28	Married	BSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Control Officer	5	Lagos	7/5/2013	Telephone	23
29	Warranty Bank	National	Beeb	Male	33	Single	BSc	Islam	Yoruba	Internal Control/Team Leader	6	Lagos	9/5/2013	Telephone	34
30	Warranty Bank	National	Chuks	Male	32	Single	MSc	Christianity	Ibo	Banking Officer	6	Lagos	6/5/2013	Telephone	15
31	Warranty Bank	National	Wunmi	Female	28	Married	BSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Ass. Banking Officer	1	Lagos	5/5/2013	Telephone	15
32	Warranty Bank	National	Lapo	Male	30	Married	BSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Investigator	1	Lagos	5/5/2013	Telephone	10
33	Warranty Bank	National	Luseg	Male	37	Married	BSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Regional Coordinator	15	Lagos	9/5/2013	Telephone	30
34	Warranty Bank	National	Temi	Female	30	Single	BSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Internal Control Group	0.2	Lagos	4/5/2013	Telephone	15
35	Warranty Bank	National	Sisi	Female	38	Married	BSc	Islam	Yoruba	Internal Audit Officer	8	Lagos	4/5/2013	Telephone	13
36	Keys Bank	National	Shaki	Female	37	Married	MBA	Christianity	Yoruba	Operations Manager	11	Lagos	27/05/2013	Telephone	51
37	Apple Bank	International	Lola	Female	42	Married	MBA	Christianity	Yoruba	Branch Manager	15	Lagos	9/4/2013	Face to Face	47
38	Fancy Bank	National	Mola	Male	37	Married	BSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Branch Operations Manager	13	Lagos	13/09/2013	Telephone	15
39	Entrepreneur Ba	National	Muye	Male	42	Married	BSc	Christianity	Yoruba	Team Lead Business Transformation	13	Lagos	13/09/2013	Telephone	30
40	Warranty Bank	National	Isy	Female	37	Married	MBA	Christianity	Ibo	Group Head/Team Lead	11	Lagos	14/09/2013	Telephone	80
41	Fancy Bank	National	Loro	Male	37	Married	Btech	Christianity	Yoruba	Branch Manager	12	Lagos	15/09/2013	Face to Face	40
42	Fancy Bank	National	Tori	Female	38	Married	BSc	Christianity	Itsekiri	Head of Talent and Performance Mgt	6	Lagos	18/09/2013	Skype	53
43	UBS Bank	National	Zeem	Male	49	Married	BSc	Islam	Yoruba	Region Director	20	Lagos	19/09/2013	Telephone	37
44	Economy Bank	National	Okene	Female	41	Married	MSc	Islam	Ibira	Deputy General Manager (DGM)	13	Lagos	19/09/2013	Telephone	23
45	Fancy Bank	National	Abdul	Male	47	Married	BSc	Islam	Ibira	Assistant General Manager (AGM)	14	Lagos	19/09/2013	Telephone	10
46	UBS Bank	National	Saidu	Male	42	Married	BSc	Islam	Yoruba	Head of Foreign Operations	15	Lagos	19/09/2013	Telephone	60
47	UBS Bank	National	Gaffy	Male	35	Married	BSc	Islam	Yoruba	Team Lead IT	7	Lagos	22/09/2013	Telephone	38
48	Warranty Bank	National	Nike	Female	37	Married	MBA	Christianity	Yoruba	E Buisness Manager	6	Lagos	22/09/2013	Telephone	30
49	UBS Bank	National	Sully	Male	38	Single	BSc	Islam	Yoruba	Team Lead -IT E Banking	7	Lagos	22/09/2013	Telephone	24
50	Pound Bank	International	Yeni	Male	40	Married	MSc	Islam	Yoruba	Branch Manager	14	Lagos	22/09/2013	Telephone	65
51	Almond	National	Sunilly	Male	45	Married	BSc	Christianity	Ibo	Head Research	17	Lagos	22/09/2013	Telephone	23
52	Almond	National	Qazim	Male	40	Married	BA	Islam	Yoruba	Senior Manager	14	Abuja	22/09/2013	Telephone	20
53	UBS Bank	National	Tricia	Female	39	Single	MBA	Christianity	Ibibio	Head of Corporate Banking	14	Lagos	26/09/2013	Telephone	45

Appendix 3: Nigerian Banking Sector Management Profile

S/N	Name of Bank	Head Office	Ownership	CEO	Gender	Tribe
1	Access Bank Plc	Lagos	Nigerian	Herbert Wigwe	Male	Ibo
2	Citibank Limited	Lagos	Foreign	Mr. Akin Dawodu	Male	Yoruba
3	DiAlmond Bank Plc	Lagos	Nigerian	Uzoma Dozie	Male	Ibo
4	Ecobank Nigeria Plc	Lagos	Nigerian/foreign	Charles Kie	Male	Ivorien (Non Nigerian)
5	Fidelity Bank Nigeria Plc	Lagos	Nigerian	Nnamdi Okonkwo	Male	Ibo
6	First Bank of Nigeria Plc	Lagos	Nigerian	Urum Kalu Eke	Male	Ibo
7	First City Monument Bank	Lagos	Nigerian	Ladi Balogun	Male	Yoruba
8	Guaranty Bank Plc	Lagos	Nigerian	Segun Agbaje	Male	Yoruba
9	Heritage Bank plc	Lagos	Nigerian	Ifie Sekibo	Male	Niger delta
10	Jaiz Bank Plc	Abuja	Nigerian	Mahe Abubakar	Male	Hausa/Fulani
11	Keystone Bank Plc	Lagos	Nigerian	Philip Ikeazor	Male	Ibo
12	Mainstreet Bank Limited	Lagos	Nigerian	Faith Tuedor-Matthews	Female	Niger delta
13	Providus Bank Plc	Lagos	Nigerian	Walter Akpani	Male	Ibo
14	Skye Bank Plc	Lagos	Nigerian	Tokunbo Abiru	Male	Yoruba
15	StanbicIBTC Plc	Lagos/South Africa	Nigerian/foreign	Sola David-Borha	Female	Yoruba
16	Standard Charter Bank	London	Foreign	Bola Adesola	Female	Yoruba
17	Sterling Bank Plc	Lagos	Nigerian	Razack Adeyemi Adeola	Male	Yoruba
18	Suntrust Bank Nigeria Limited	Lagos	Nigerian	Muhammad Jibrin	Male	Hausa/Fulani
19	Union Bank of Nigeria	Lagos	Nigerian	Emeka Emuwa	Male	Ibo
20	United Bank For Africa	Lagos	Nigerian	Kennedy Uzoka	Male	Ibo
21	Unity Bank Plc	Lagos	Nigerian	Tomi Somefun	Male	Yoruba
22	Wema Bank Plc	Lagos	Nigerian	Segun Oloketuyi	Male	Yoruba
23	Zenith Bank Plc	Lagos	Nigerian	Peter Amangbo	Male	Ibo

Appendix 4: Interview Questions / Themes – Managers

Background Information

Name:

Gender:

Age (range):

Highest Qualification (and /or professional qualification):

Marital Status:

Nationality / Tribe:

Religion:

Company name:

Job Position / title:

Department:

Length in position:

Brief career history:

HRM in the Organisation

1. Are you aware of policies and practices relating to training, motivation, grievance, development (promotion), and recruitment in your organisation?

Or

2. *What HRM policies and practices are you aware of in your organisation?*

3. How do you see the link between your HRM policies and your organisations strategy

- *How does it (HRM policies) link to your mission statement?*

4. Are you responsible for formulating and/ or implementing these policies?

- *How are you responsible*

5. What is your experience in formulating these policies?

- *What are the main drivers (economic, social or cultural issues or combination of all) behind these policies in your workplace?*
- *What the most important factors to you in managing people in your workplace?*
- *How relevant is the Nigerian traditions (e.g. Oriki – praise song, communal working etc) to managing people relevant to the way people are managed in your workplace?*
 - ✓ *To what extent*
 - ✓ *Tell me a story when it did?*
 - ✓ *Give me an example*

6. How would you describe your workplace HRM policies and practices?

- *What is your experience of it?*
- *How does it (HR policies & practise) affect your ability to meet your other engagements like family obligations, society roles etc?*

Cultural & Peoples' Value

7. What do you perceive as key Nigerian cultural values?
 - *Give some examples*
 - *Tell me a story where someone demonstrated it in the workplace?*

8. Do you hold any traditional or special titles within your family or community?
 - *What is your experience of this responsibility / title?*
 - *How relevant is this responsibility or title to how you work?*
 - *Does this responsibility or title give influence to your role in the workplace?*

9. Describe your experience of the working/managing people of different tribes in your workplace?
 - *To what extent do you think that certain tribes bring certain values to workplace?*
 - *To what extent do you think your organisation culture / styles represent the Nigerian cultural values?*

10. What would you consider your core values in terms trust, being dependable etc?
 - *To what extent are you able to demonstrate these values in your work place?*
 - *Since working for your organisation do you think that some of your values have changed?*
 - ✓ *How have they changed*
 - ✓ *Consequences of change*

11. To what extent do external commitments (such as family, religion, traditions, taboos, kinship) influence your career choice?
 - *How do you balance these commitments (social obligations) with your work?*
 - ✓ *If they are hard to balance, why is this case?*

SHRM - Best practice vs Best fit

12. To what extent do you think that your personal values match your HRM policies and practices where you work?

- *Do you think that there is alignment between workers' values and HRM policies and practices in your workplace?*
 - ✓ *If so, where?*
 - ✓ *If not, why not?*
- *Do you think your workplace HRM is simply copying the western / international HRM policies and practices?*
- *What is your perception of the workplace HRM policies –*
 - ✓ *is it converging i.e. changing into western/imported values*
 - ✓ *is it diverging i.e. reflecting Nigerian value system*
 - ✓ *Is it hybrid between western/international and Nigerian value system?*
 - ✓ *Does it matter to you if it matters to you if it Nigerian or western or international?*
 - ✓ *Tell me what will matter to you?*
- *Does it matter to you if your workplace HRM policies and practices are copied from the west or other parts of the world?*
- *Do you have any suggestions as to how your workplace HRM policies and practices can be tailored more to meet Nigerian cultural values?*
 - ✓ *Can these differences (if applicable) be reconciled?*

13. How much influence do you think you have in how you are managed in your workplace?

- *How would you describe the relationship between line managers and their reports within your workplace?*
- *Describe your experience of promotion & motivation in your work place?*
- *Describe your experience of recruitment in your workplace?*

- *Describe your experience of training in your workplace?*
- *Describe your experience of the grievance process in your workplace?*

14. To what extent do managers take interest in personal problems of their subordinates?

- *To what extent do your workplace HRM policies and practices reflect this interest?*
 - ✓ *Where is the compatibility?*
 - ✓ *Where is the difference?*

15. Is there anything you would like to say that you've not said during this interview (i.e. in terms of making ends meet, in terms of family problems, health etc)?